

Lee College President

Dr. Lynda Villanueva



Dr. Lynda Villanueva serves as the 10th president of Lee College and holds the distinction of being both the third woman and the first person of color to lead the institution in its 91-year history. A firm believer that a strong campus culture is rooted in valuing each individual and fostering well-being, Dr. Villanueva leads with empathy, transparency, and a deep commitment to student success. She builds high-performing teams centered on trust, guided by data, and grounded in shared values — with an unwavering focus on ensuring all students thrive, regardless of background.

Under her leadership, Lee College has embraced innovation to meet the changing needs of its students and community. She introduced the First Time Free at Lee

program, the centerpiece of the college's post-pandemic recovery efforts, which helped propel Lee College to record-breaking enrollment for three consecutive years. The college also received a transformative \$5 million gift from philanthropist MacKenzie Scott and launched the Student Resource and Advocacy Center to help students overcome unmet basic needs. Since 2018, Lee College has been recognized as an Achieving the Dream Leader College of Distinction, a reflection of its commitment to equity and excellence under her direction.

Dr. Villanueva is a proud alumna of the inaugural Rising Presidents Fellowship (2016–2017) and the inaugural Aspen Presidents Fellowship (2023–2024). She actively contributes to national and regional efforts in higher education through her service with the American Association of Community Colleges, the Achieving the Dream Community College Women Succeed Advisory Group, the Community College Research Center, Higher Education Research and Development Institute, and the Student-Parent Families at the Center Leadership Council. Her leadership extends into the broader local community as well, with roles in the Baytown Chamber of Commerce, Baytown Rotary Club, Economic Development Foundation, Greater Houston Partnership, Houston Methodist Baytown Hospital, Houston Port Economic Alliance, Mont Belvieu Area Chamber of Commerce, and the United Way of Greater Baytown Area and Chambers County.

She holds a Bachelor of Science in Psychology from Colorado State University, and both a Master of Arts and a Doctor of Philosophy in Industrial/Organizational Psychology from the University of Houston.

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