

Celebrating The Power of Advanced Manufacturing Education

November 2025

October's Manufacturing Month is a time to recognize the vital role advanced manufacturing plays in the San Diego and Imperial economies and the importance of preparing the next generation of students in skilled trades. Community colleges are at the heart of this effort through their robust [advanced manufacturing programs](#), connecting students to high-demand careers in industries that keep our communities progressing.

Modern manufacturing is not what it used to be; it is high-tech, clean and driven by innovation. From robotics and automation to precision machining and additive manufacturing, today's manufacturing careers require advanced technical skills and problem-solving abilities. Community colleges provide the hands-on training and industry partnerships that make these careers attainable.

By working closely with local employers, colleges ensure classroom equipment matches that of industry, so students get to learn on the same equipment and systems used in real workplaces. This collaboration helps fill the growing skills gap and supports regional economic growth.

This year's Manufacturing Month included several work-based learning opportunities for students in the region, thanks to the collaboration between the SDI RC's Employer Engagement team, employers and colleges.

Manufacturing in Action at SeeScan: Behind the Tools & Technology

On Oct. 17, 15 students from Cuyamaca College, San Diego Mesa College and San Diego City College (SDCC) had the opportunity to explore San Diego-based SeeScan's state-of-the-art manufacturing facilities. Attendees were students from engineering, manufacturing, and computer-aided drafting and design programs who got to see firsthand how the company designs, engineers and builds professional tools — from subsea lights and cameras to utility locating gear and plumbing diagnostic systems.

Solar Turbines Hosts Education Partners

Thanks to an introduction facilitated by the SDI RC, education partners from East County Adult Education, Grossmont Union High School District and Imperial Valley College (IVC) were invited to tour Solar Turbines' Kearny Mesa facility on Oct. 20, where Production/Test Supervisor Mike Nielson shared insights into the company's hiring focuses and goals of recruiting skilled mechanics and technicians. The tour brought together educators and workforce partners dedicated to expanding career pathways in advanced manufacturing. Collaborations like these reflect SDI RC's ongoing commitment to fostering connections that lead to meaningful industry-education partnerships.

Earthrise Nutritionals Visits IVC's LIFT Programs

Earthrise Nutritionals CEO Takaaki Ono visited IVC last month to meet IVC LIFT program leadership and faculty and see the facilities and equipment students utilize in their training. Earthrise Nutritionals and IVC have partnered to offer students for-credit internships, site tours of Earthrise's facilities and improved curriculum through participation in industry advisory committee meetings.

IVC MESA Students Visit USG Plaster City in Imperial Valley

IVC MESA students visited USG Plaster City to gain real-world insight into plant operations and engineering applications. During the visit, they explored how raw materials are transformed into finished products, learned about the technology and processes behind manufacturing, and connected classroom concepts to real engineering careers. The experience gave students a deeper understanding of how engineers solve problems, improve efficiency and drive innovation in industry.

Hunter Manufacturing Day Event

For the first time since 2019, Hunter opened its doors for its Manufacturing Day event, giving MiraCosta and Palomar college students a firsthand look at the world of modern manufacturing. The event included welcome remarks from Greg Hunter and the Hunter team, an overview of Hunter's history and a 90-minute guided tour of their manufacturing areas.

Water Career Day

Water Career Day, hosted by the San Elijo Joint Powers Authority at the San Elijo Water Campus, was a hands-on day designed to introduce the real work of water infrastructure to local students and transitioning veterans. Students from MiraCosta and Palomar rotated through seven hands-on, work-based learning stations and met with three local water agencies to learn about employment opportunities.

GKN Aerospace Hosts New Apprentices

SDCC and GKN Aerospace have launched a registered apprenticeship program for industrial maintenance technicians, enrolling their first apprentice during Manufacturing Month.

As we celebrate Manufacturing Month, we honor the educators, students and industry partners who make advanced manufacturing education a success — and who are building the future of American industry.