

Career-Ready and Confident: Grossmont-Cuyamaca Alumna Katya Korkees' Path to San Diego State University

November 2025

Like many young adults her age, Grossmont-Cuyamaca Community College District alum Katya Korkees began college unsure of what direction to take.

With a creative streak and an eye for social media, she considered marketing but wasn't certain how to turn her interests into a career.

"I was kind of undecided," she recalled. "Near the end of August, when I was actually registering for classes, I decided to do business because I figured business was just very broad, and I feel like there's so much that you can do."

That openness to explore became the foundation to her success — guided by the many programs, mentors and networking opportunities across the San Diego & Imperial Counties Regional Consortium (SDI RC) — as she worked to discover her strengths and career path.

Although Katya excelled academically — maintaining a GPA above 3.5 and earning a spot on the Dean's List in her second semester — she still wasn't entirely sure if she was on the right path.

Then, she got an email from the college's Job Placement Case Manager (JPCM), Malena Medrano, about available internships, and things finally began to fall into place. For Katya, internships weren't just a chance to gain work experience; they were a way to narrow down her options and figure out what she could see herself doing.

It was through Medrano that Katya learned that her school was recognized as a [Business Verified Program](#) through the San Diego Regional EDC's Advancing San Diego initiative, signifying that its curriculum aligns with current real-world workforce needs. The designation also opened doors to various internship opportunities, with the JPCM team guiding her through every step, from resume building to mock interviews.

She soon landed her first marketing internship at East County Schools Federal Credit Union, where she now works as an administrative assistant nearly two years later. And when her interests shifted from marketing to human resources, she again reached out to the JPCM team, and eventually, she was able to land a K-16 Collaborative internship as a people operations intern at the Downtown San Diego Partnership.

Katya says each new experience has not only helped her learn more about the industry and gain confidence in herself but also helped her get her foot in the door and gain a sense of belonging.

“They’ve really just helped me get a sense of what my future career could look like,” she said. “And ultimately, they have really helped me connect with some amazing professionals that I still am in contact with today. And if I need something, they would be more than happy to help me out.”

With every new connection, Katya found fresh opportunities. Now majoring in Human Resources at San Diego State University, Katya is paying it forward by sharing some of the lessons she learned with other students. She was recently invited to speak on [The Art of Administration](#), a Cuyamaca College Business Office Technology virtual speaker panel, where she shared advice with students about overcoming imposter syndrome and the importance of putting yourself out there.

“Over time, I did learn that my experience really depended on how much effort I put into my position, so I started showing up to events more,” Katya said during the panel. “I started introducing myself even to people I didn’t recognize. And I connected more with people across departments. ... My advice is to make the most out of every opportunity, especially networking events. Just show up, be proactive, because the impression you make goes beyond just the team you work with.”

Katya credits the programs and people at Grossmont-Cuyamaca for helping her find her footing.

“If you want an internship, you have to keep showing them that you want it. Don’t be afraid to take no as an answer. But most importantly, don’t be afraid to ask for help either because there are so many people on campus who are going to help you one way or another.”