

# BRONCOS IN TRANSIT

## ALUMNI DRIVE COMMUNITY IMPACT THROUGH CAREERS AT FOOTHILL TRANSIT

BY NANCY YEANG

**Mathew Nakano** grew up in the San Gabriel Valley with a love of the planet and aspired to have a career that also helped his community – family, friends and neighbors.

As a third-generation Japanese American and first-generation Mexican American, Nakano was the first in his family to attend college and felt the pressures of wanting to make his parents proud while also finding a career that would fulfill his dream of making the world a better place.

At Cal Poly Pomona, Nakano found the best of both worlds – polytechnic experiences that allowed him to advocate for his community and the environment. As a business student, he took a class creating marketing content promoting the **Poly Pantry** to reach students who needed food resources the most. He also joined campus clubs and collaborated with other students on how to be conscious consumers. For one project, they researched organizations that were grounded in ethical community or environmental practices and created marketing content to support their products.

“My Bronco experience helped me to be a well-rounded student, and I was finding companies and careers that would advance me professionally and support my values and what I believed in,” says Nakano (’22, marketing). “I worked with professors who inspired me to push forward by knowing that it’s not just an assignment that needs to be done, but that there needs to be a purpose behind everything it is that I do.”

Nakano’s passion for serving his community and the world led him to a career at **Foothill Transit**, which provides public transit options to more than 48,000 riders every day in the San Gabriel Valley, from Los Angeles to Montclair. He first started as a marketing intern his junior year and was hired as a government relations coordinator after graduating in 2022. In his work at Foothill Transit, he is an advocate for public transit, which reduces local emissions and traffic congestion, and he sees that as a small step to making the world a better place.

“CPP prepared me for all the work that I was doing at Foothill Transit. I’m in the right place because our culture and mission are reflected in the things I was learning as a student and what I am personally passionate about,” Nakano says. “I directly help the community around me get to their essential travel, including my neighbors and friends who rely on Foothill Transit to get to their jobs and appointments, and as we advocate for zero emissions, it’s also good for the planet.”

### SERVICE STARTS IN POMONA

Nakano is one of many Bronco alumni who work at the transit agency, a group committed to improving the daily lives of their community in a sustainable way. They all have something else in common – their Cal Poly Pomona education which gave them a strong professional foundation.

**Linda Apodaca** (’89, communication), a manager of community engagement, credits the university for helping her discover her strengths and passion for civic engagement. As a student reporter and photographer at **The Poly Post**, she learned how to write and present messages quickly, concisely and clearly.

Today, Apodaca connects Foothill Transit with local organizations such as school districts and community groups, educating them on how to use the bus and becoming more comfortable with the transit system.

“Going to CPP was such an eye opener. It was a tremendous opportunity to get to know people, explore things I was interested in and believe





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**MATTHEW NAKANO**

'22, marketing and business administration  
Government Relations Coordinator



*"I felt prepared for my very first job out of college. At CPP, working with a diverse group of people helped me build a foundation of communication and organizational management skills."*

**LAUREN CUCCHISSI**

'19, business management  
Administrative Support, Procurement Department

that I could make my dreams happen," Apodaca says. "I really enjoyed the hands-on portion of my education. It gave me a realistic picture of what I was going to be doing, to the point where I really understood where I was headed and could envision my future career."

**SERVING STUDENTS LIKE THEM**

Recently, Foothill Transit increased their services for Cal Poly Pomona students, and alumni have a front row opportunity to support their alma mater.

The new Class Pass program, which provides free rides for Bronco students, is close to the heart of HENDY SATYA ('10, business administration), a marketing and communications manager at Foothill Transit. His parents immigrated from Indonesia, and taking public transportation was an inexpensive and necessary resource to go where they needed to go. It's the same resource that current students also need access to.

"I grew up in Montebello and West Covina taking the bus and also rode the bus to class at Cal Poly Pomona," Satya says. "Because I worked to put myself through college, I know how important it is to have cheap, reliable transportation. It's one less thing for me to worry about. With the Class Pass program, Foothill Transit is an additional life raft for many students."

Since its pilot launch in fall 2021, the program has been a success. After the first full year, more than 26,000 students signed up for a Class Pass TAP card and took over 75,000 trips. In January, Foothill Transit and the university teamed up again to add the Silver Streak bus stop at the center of campus. With their free Class Pass TAP card, students can get to downtown LA within an hour free of charge.

"I wanted to give back to CPP and the greater community," says Satya, who has been with Foothill Transit for 15 years. "Coming from being an alum and using public transit almost my whole life, I wanted to provide this same benefit to current students."

**BRONCO ALUMNI:**

**LET US KNOW WHAT YOU ARE UP TO!**

*Fill out a Class Note and tell us how CPP helped launch your career.*



*"One of my favorite classes was international business taught by Dr. William Relf. He had real-world business experiences and connected with the students. Overall, my experiences at Cal Poly Pomona set a great foundation for my career in public service."*

**JOHN CURLEY**

'92, management and human resources  
Chief of Safety and Security



*"There are now three Cal Poly Pomona alumni in my department. We all graduated different years and we have talked about how different our experiences were coming from different majors. At the end of the day, we have that centralized feeling that CPP was home and was good to us. We're so proud to be Broncos."*

**DENISE MARTINEZ**

'17, graphic design  
Creative Content Designer

# BLACK THRIVING

A March Toward a More EQUITABLE CAMPUS COMMUNITY



*"We must challenge ourselves daily to promote equity, justice, and inclusion in our classrooms, programs, units, meetings, budgets, promotions, interactions, policies and procedures. I believe with all of us working together that a brighter day is on the horizon."*

**JONATHAN GRADY**

Senior associate vice president and dean of students

**BY DAVID SEDILLO**

Students, staff and faculty who identify as being of African descent were led through a 90-minute forum in May 2022 by psychologist Jacquelyn Johnson, who had been invited to Cal Poly Pomona to conduct an assessment. The goal: to gain insight into the well-being of Black individuals on campus in 11 distinct categories.

The results were troubling. The report found that intervention for faculty and staff was needed in all 11 categories, including areas such as cultural representation, upward mobility and authenticity. Eight of 11 categories were flagged for students.

The message was clear: Black students, staff and faculty felt minimized, underrepresented and frustrated. Data points revealed overwhelmingly that Black individuals felt they could not show up