



California Community Colleges

PRESS RELEASE

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Feather River and Victor Valley Colleges Garner Board of Governors Honors For Equity Work; State Sen. Monique Limón Named Equity Champion

The system's annual Dr. John W. Rice Awards Recognize Leaders Advancing Diversity, Equity Inclusion and Accessibility

SACRAMENTO, Calif. — Feather River College, with its strong history of developing and enhancing strategies to improve learning and advance equitable placement, along with Victor Valley College, whose multipronged approach to student support is steadily improving student success, have been named this year's John W. Rice Equity and Student Success award recipients.

A newly established Legislative Equity Award was presented to state Sen. Monique Limón (D-Santa Barbara) in honor of her commitment to community colleges and reducing equity barriers for Dreamers and other underrepresented students.

Representatives of the colleges (photos below) were presented with the awards at a ceremony this week in Sacramento. Lake Tahoe Community College earned an honorable mention in the college equity award category.

The awards focus on the progress colleges are making in reforming remedial education. The California Community Colleges has seen significant increases in the number of

students completing transfer-level English and math courses as a result of the implementation of AB 705.

“On behalf of the Board of Governors, I want to congratulate Feather River College, Victor Valley College, and Lake Tahoe Community College for setting the standard in advancing equitable placement goals and objectives and to Sen. Limón for her unwavering commitment to community colleges,” said Board of Governors President Amy Costa. “Their work truly is exemplary.”

Established in 2001, the Dr. John W. Rice Awards annually recognize colleges and college districts for setting the standard in advancing diversity, equity and accessibility to improve student outcomes.

Finalists for the Equity Award won by Feather River College were chosen based on the reduction of equity gaps for students of color completing gateway, transfer-level courses in English and mathematics. For the Student Success Award won by Victor Valley college, the criteria focus on colleges seeing the greatest improvements in all students completing gateway transfer-level English and math.

“Extraordinary progress has been made by our system as we have reformed remedial education. Feather River and Victor Valley Colleges are shining examples to follow,” said Interim Chancellor Daisy Gonzales, PhD. “Just 10 years ago, the vast majority of students entering community colleges were forced into a flawed remedial education system and students’ work didn’t count toward a degree or transfer. Now, we are unlocking students’ true potential and dismantling structures that do not work for our students.”

The awards are named in honor of former Board of Governors of the California Community Colleges member Dr. John W. Rice from 1992 to 2000. He was a leader, innovator and spokesperson for equal employment opportunity and nondiscrimination in the largest system of higher education in the nation. The Legislative Equity Award was added this year to recognize lawmakers who demonstrate steadfast commitment and support to community colleges and its 1.8 million students.

been a longtime advocate for community college students, especially those underrepresented in the legislative and policy sphere. In previous years, she has successfully advocated for Hunger-Free Campus funding to reduce basic needs insecurity on community college campuses and has sponsored a legislative resolution declaring April “Community College Month” in California.

In 2022, Sen. Limón authored Senate Bill 1141, cosponsored by the California Community Colleges Chancellor’s Office and Immigrants Rising, to break down barriers for undocumented adult learner students by lifting the cap on credit-hours these students may use to qualify for AB 540 status when transferring to a four-year institution, allowing them to qualify for an exemption to nonresident tuition.

“I am honored to be recognized as the first ever legislative equity champion by the California Community Colleges. As a former educator, I am grateful that in my role as a State Senator I have the opportunity to continue to work on policies that ensure every Californian has access to a higher education,” Limón said. “As a Legislative Equity Champion for our California Community Colleges, I remain committed to all of our students including our undocumented students and the work ahead to make educational and economic opportunities accessible to all.”

The California Community Colleges is the largest system of higher education in the nation, composed of 73 districts and 116 colleges serving 1.8 million students per year. California community colleges provide career education and workforce training; guaranteed transfer to four-year universities; degree and certificate pathways. As the state’s engine for social and economic mobility, the California Community Colleges supports the Vision for Success, a strategic plan designed to improve student success outcomes, increase transfer rates and eliminate achievement gaps. For more information, please visit the California Community Colleges website or follow us on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter.

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Feather River College