

As the recently elected President of the Yosemite Community College District Board (YCCD) of Trustees, my colleagues have asked me to explain our role as policy makers for our two community colleges, Modesto Junior College and Columbia College.

First, I want to congratulate our new Modesto Junior College President Brian Sanders. Our entire board hopes he will have a successful term. We will give him our fullest possible support because his success benefits our district as a whole.

Our district covers over 4,500 square miles and our two campuses in Modesto and Sonora serve a population of over 550,000 persons in all of Stanislaus and Tuolumne Counties and portions of San Joaquin, Merced, Santa Clara, and Calaveras Counties.

YCCD provides educational services to 28,000 students annually, including adult education. Many of the specialist training opportunities our community needs the most, like nursing, begin at Modesto Junior college. In that needed service area, we currently have 60 slots for new nurse training and plan to grow to 80 students shortly thereafter.

Each of the seven trustees represent individual districts elected by the voters of that area to make policy for both colleges after extensive consultation with all campus constituencies including faculty, staff, students, alumni and friends of both institutions.

The Board of Trustees has two standing committees. The Finance Committee assists the full board in approving the district and colleges' annual budgets. The Policy Committee advises the full board on academic and related issues.

The Board hires the Chancellor who selects our campus presidents and the other staff necessary to implement all policy and operations necessary to run our District office and both campuses.

We believe in shared governance and broad consultation, but realize we are responsible to the taxpayers and voters of the district to ensure our colleges serve the needs of our students in the most economical way possible.

Contrary to previous media reports, we do not directly select the campus presidents, but we do provide final approval or disapproval for our Chancellor's selections. We also approve all contracts for district and college employees and approve final labor agreements for compensation, benefits and work rules for all of bargaining units.

Over the next year, it is my intent as Board President to update our community on our actions on a regular basis.

If you would like any additional information on our District, the Board of Trustees, Modesto Junior College or Columbia College, please visit our website at www.yosemite.edu or email me, Milton Richards at richardsm@yosemite.edu.

On behalf all of my colleagues, let me express what an honor it is to serve our community as your elected representatives for our community colleges.

Milt

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