



## *NEWS Release*

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**YOSEMITE COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT**  
COLUMBIA COLLEGE • MODESTO JUNIOR COLLEGE

### YCCD WINS PRESTIGIOUS NATIONAL AWARD

MODESTO, CA – June 19, 2002 – The Yosemite Community College District (YCCD) was recently named the recipient of the “2002 Pacific Region Equity Award” by the Association for Community College Trustees for its Beyond Tolerance Initiative.

YCCD’s Beyond Tolerance Initiative promotes a positive learning environment where access, success, and excellence thrive in all facets at its Modesto Junior College and Columbia College campuses. The Initiative ensures that YCCD’s learning and work environment and climate is characterized by inclusiveness, tolerance, and respect for all of its students, staff, and community.

“This award is a national recognition and indication of what we are doing on our local campuses to go ‘beyond tolerance’,” stated YCCD Trustee, Abe Rojas, who attended the award ceremony. “It is a rewarding tribute to our staff.”

YCCD has been a model institution for inclusiveness and mutual respect, and has taken on a major responsibility in the community to move ‘beyond tolerance.’ The District successfully recruits individuals who reflect California’s diverse population, and instructors embrace the Initiative by incorporating topics of diversity and tolerance in curriculum and by creating opportunities for students to attend and participate in tolerance related events and activities.

Some of those events have recently included presentations to the community by Dr. Terry Roberts, Mikhail Gorbachev, Yolanda King, Maya Angelou, T.J. Leyden and Edward James Olmos. Upcoming events include Judy Shepard speaking on “The Legacy of Matthew Shepard” in October and Rita Coolidge’s “One Nation” concert next spring.

“It’s gratifying to be recognized by the national Association for our efforts. Hopefully, in addition to changing the campus climate, we can help have an impact on the communities in our region,” stated

YCCD Board Chair, Joe Mitchell. The award was given to only four community college districts nationwide and follows last year's winning of the John Rice Diversity Award of Recognition for the Beyond Tolerance Initiative, presented by the California State Chancellor's Office.

YCCD's Beyond Tolerance Initiative began in 1998, after eighteen YCCD staff members traveled to Los Angeles for intensive tolerance training at the Simon Wiesenthal Center Museum of Tolerance and returned to share their enthusiasm. Over 470 YCCD staff, as well as trustees and student leaders, have participated in tolerance training since that initial trip.

According to YCCD Chancellor Pam Fisher, the accomplishment is testimony to a conscientious team effort, "This recognition is shared by the many MJC, Columbia and YCCD staff who have gone the extra mile to make our colleges open and welcome to all. The Initiative has improved our learning environment and contributed to our goal of educational excellence."

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