



NEWS Release

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YOSEMITE COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT
COLUMBIA COLLEGE • MODESTO JUNIOR COLLEGE

YCCD RATED #1 - WINS NATIONAL EQUITY AWARD

MODESTO, CA – September 25, 2002 – Chosen out of over 1,100 community colleges across the nation, the Yosemite Community College District (YCCD) was presented the national “2002 ACCT Charles Kennedy Equity Award” by the Association for Community College Trustees (ACCT) for its Beyond Tolerance Initiative at the Annual Association Awards Convention, held in Philadelphia.

For four years, YCCD has been a community leader in the journey to achieve equity and justice. District trustees have actively supported the Beyond Tolerance Initiative’s mission of ensuring that the campus learning and work environment is characterized by inclusiveness, tolerance and respect for all at its Modesto Junior College and Columbia College campuses.

“It’s wonderful to have people acknowledge the value of the program we have. We are continually reminded of the importance of the Beyond Tolerance Initiative locally and hope to see more programs spring up in other colleges,” stated YCCD Board Chair, Joe Mitchell.

Key to the Initiative’s success has been the participation of over 500 District staff in training at the Museum of Tolerance in Los Angeles. This training has led to incorporation of diversity and tolerance topics in the curriculum, opportunities for students to participate in tolerance-related activities and successful recruitment and hiring of individuals who reflect the diverse population.

The award also recognizes exemplary commitment by a community college governing board and Chancellor in assuring results for the enhancement and expansion of opportunities for women and minorities to achieve equity in the college’s education programs and services and in the administration and delivery of those programs and services.

“As an educator for over 30 years, I can tell you that the Beyond Tolerance Initiative has had a more profound effect on our campuses than any professional development activity in which I’ve ever observed or participated,” stated YCCD Chancellor Pamila Fisher.

By ensuring open access and equity, YCCD's Beyond Tolerance Initiative promotes a positive learning environment. A goal of the initiative is to enhance the ability of YCCD to provide every person with a college education that meets the individual goals of an ever-changing population by eliminating all barriers and obstacles. In this way every student is provided an opportunity to be educated to their fullest potential. The national award comes three months after winning the Pacific Region Equity Award of western states.

"I noticed a positive change for all that have participated in this Initiative. The change really shows just in the way we carry on every day and treat each other with respect at our institution at all times," stated YCCD Trustee, Delsie Schrimp, who attended the award ceremony. "Winning the award was very meaningful and well deserved by the colleges and district."

As a model institution for inclusiveness and mutual respect, YCCD has taken on a major responsibility in the community to move 'beyond tolerance.' 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" on October 24 and MJC's theatre presentation of "The Laramie Project" from October 25 – November 3.

According to YCCD Chancellor Pam Fisher, winning the national award is testimony to a conscientious team effort, " that has taken us a great leap forward toward creating a climate that truly welcomes, respects and values everyone. Our district was acknowledged for ensuring access, success and excellence for all people."

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