



YCCD Chancellor to Retire

March 11, 2004

MODESTO, CA –Dr. Pamila Fisher, chancellor of the Yosemite Community College District (YCCD), is retiring in August. She announced her retirement yesterday. Dr. Fisher has served the college district for more than 30 years, where she began her community college career as an instructor and administrator prior to becoming chancellor twelve years ago. In that role, she provided leadership to the district, which covers six counties and 4,500 square miles with two colleges, Modesto Junior College and Columbia College, and approximately 29,000 students, a staff of over 1,300 and an annual budget of over \$100 million.

Board Chair Delsie Schrimp of Oakdale said, "We are very sorry to see her go. She has done a wonderful job as chancellor. Over the past 12 years, Dr. Fisher has provided the leadership and vision to help build the Yosemite Community College District into one of the best community college district's in the nation."

Dr. Fisher said, "It has been an honor to serve this college district. The over 30 years of service was made even more special by the fact that I am an alumnus of MJC. YCCD has become a major positive force in our communities and our reputation for excellence and inclusion is well known in the state and in the country. It has been a pleasure to work with a superb cadre of staff who are committed to a positive vision for our colleges and our students."

Dr. Fisher stated, "My professional plans after retiring include teaching and consulting with a focus on leadership development and the promotion of diversity and inclusiveness. I am discussing opportunities with university doctoral programs and with national associations, as well as working with other community college districts and state systems throughout the country that are committed to these goals."

She also cited personal plans, "Charlie and I will be moving to the Columbia Gorge area of Oregon where our daughter's family lives" and, "that means there will be much more time to enjoy our family, the beautiful wonders of nature and the delightful role of 'grandma'." Pamila and her husband Charlie

Fisher, a retired MJC counselor, have been married for 39 years, and their daughter and son-in-law, Pika and Greg Myers are parents of Fisher's 16-month old grandson, Sage.

Board Trustee Pat Dean of Sonora said, "I feel very fortunate since being selected on the board that I've had the opportunity to work under her tutelage. She is very bright, intelligent and has been exceptionally helpful to me in the role of trustee."

Dr. Fisher currently is the past-Chair of the Board of Directors of the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC). Due to her efforts, YCCD is nationally known for the district's Beyond Tolerance Initiative, whose purpose is to ensure that the campus learning and work environment and climate is characterized by inclusiveness, tolerance and respect for all students, staff and the community. She has won numerous honors as chancellor, including in the areas of diversity and inclusiveness, the "National Kennedy Equity Award," "Regional Equity Award," "Woman of Courage Award," "John Rice Diversity Award," and "Excellence in Equity Award." She has also won many awards as an organizational leader, including the "Pacific Region CEO of the Year," "President of the Year," "Distinguished Administrator Award," and "Woman of the Year." In addition, for over 20 years, she has served as founder and Director of the Asilomar Leadership Seminar – an intensive four-day seminar that focuses on the issues facing women who have made a commitment to community college administration as a future goal.

Dr. Fisher has also served in national and state leadership positions such as Board Chair of the American Association of Community Colleges, President of the American Association of Women in Community Colleges and President of the California Association of Community Colleges. Her leadership has brought local, state and national recognition to the Yosemite Community College District.

MJC President James Williams said, "Dr. Fisher has done an outstanding job of leading the Yosemite Community College District during her tenure as Chancellor. Due to her commitment to academic excellence, access to higher education, and workforce and economic development opportunities, our service region has become a national model. Dr. Fisher's departure will leave a tremendous void in our higher education community."

In the next six months, Dr. Fisher will work to assist the Board and fellow college and district colleagues to plan, prepare and address numerous challenges currently on the district's agenda, such as the always challenging state budget situation, an anticipated large number of retirees, and a potential district-wide facilities bond measure.

Dr. Fisher stated that she always will be a proud supporter of MJC and Columbia College as she fills the role of Chancellor Emeritus. The YCCD has had only three top administrators since MJC and Columbia merged to form the district in 1968. The first superintendent was Dr. J. Kenneth Rowland (1968-1976), who was followed by Dr. Tom Van Groningen (1976-1992). Dr. Fisher served as a vice-chancellor for Dr. Van Groningen prior to being named chancellor.

Columbia College President Jim Riggs stated, "She's been a great leader for the district and a great supporter of Columbia College. We would not have reached the prominence we have without her help and guidance."

Dr. Fisher, who was born and raised in Modesto and is a graduate of Downey High School, has been active in Modesto Rotary and many other community organizations and also is a graduate of local colleges. She received her A.A. degree from Modesto Junior College, B.A. and M.A. in Counseling and Psychology from California State University, Stanislaus, and her Ed.D. in Psychology and Counseling from the University of the Pacific.

Board Trustee Abe Rojas of Turlock said, "She's really going to be missed by the district. She's been able to run the district in an efficient manner, especially during times of budget cuts. Her expertise led to overcoming budget deficits without laying off personnel. She's a great asset, recognized nationally, and always highly spoken of in state and national circles. She always kept the Board updated on legislative issues and was very instrumental in informing legislators of our concerns. Pam will leave very big shoes to fill. Hopefully, we can find someone to provide the leadership that she did."

The Board of Trustees will discuss plans for quickly starting a national search for the Chancellor's replacement at a special meeting on March 17.

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