



## YCCD SELECTS NEW CHANCELLOR

April 14, 2005

MODESTO, CA – Dr. James H. Williams has been offered the job of Chancellor of the Yosemite Community College District (YCCD). The YCCD Board of Trustees interviewed finalists for the position on Tuesday and announced at their monthly Board meeting last night that Dr. Williams was their unanimous choice.

“I am very honored to have been selected by the Board of Trustees to serve as the permanent Chancellor for the Yosemite Community College District. I look forward to continuing to serve as the leader of a great community college district that is committed to providing access and educational excellence for the residents in our service region. We are very fortunate to have to outstanding community colleges in our district – Columbia College and Modesto Junior College – with outstanding faculty, staff, and administrators that are committed to providing world class learning opportunities for our students,” said Williams.

According to Trustee Paul Neumann, “We had a strong pool of candidates and we chose who we felt is the best person to lead the district. He is a decisive, very well balanced person who is a strong leader. We look forward to a number of exciting years with him leading the district.”

Williams has been serving as Interim Chancellor since June 1, 2004, after replacing retiring Chancellor Pamila Fisher. As Interim Chancellor, Williams led the district to a successful \$326 million bond measure that will change the face of the district’s two colleges, Modesto Junior College and Columbia College, for many years to come.

“I felt that Dr. Williams was the right choice because of the exemplary way he helped promote the Bond Measure E, which brought him in contact with the community and he gained a lot of respect,” noted Trustee Abe Rojas.

Previous to serving as Interim YCCD Chancellor, Williams was president of MJC since January 2002. From 1999 to 2002, Williams was president of Arapahoe Community College in Littleton, Colorado and from 1995 to 1999, president of Spokane Community College in Spokane, Washington.

His leadership philosophy is expressed in a document he wrote entitled *Management Manifesto: Moving in Harmony Toward the Twenty-first Century*. In it he expresses his expectations that “everything we do in the months and years ahead must include a serious attempt to embrace the following values: Integrity, interconnectedness, teamwork, flexibility, passion, and compassion.”

According to Trustee Delsie Schrimp, “Dr. Williams is very well liked by the entire administration and staff at the two colleges. He is very personable and very active in the community. He is often asked to speak on behalf of issues of diversity and tolerance. I think he will be a great addition to our district.”

Williams received his Ph.D. from Washington State University in Education in 1983 with an emphasis on Higher Education Administration. He received his M.S. degree in 1974 from Pepperdine University in Urban Planning and Development. Prior to his community college presidencies, he also served 18 years in higher education at California State Polytechnic University in Pomona, with his last position being Dean of the College of Letters, Arts, and Social Sciences.

Williams’ selection comes after a nationwide search, which began in October 2004. The search committee and the YCCD Board of Trustees have been working on the process of selecting a new YCCD Chancellor with the assistance of search consultant, Dr. Tom Harris. The position has been recruited for extensively and advertised nationally. Initial interviews were completed March 29, 2005 and the names of the four finalists were forwarded to the Board of Trustees for their review last week

Earlier this week, the finalists appeared at a series of forums at MJC’s East and West Campus and also at Columbia College with various constituencies to discuss their preparation for the position, their education and leadership philosophy, and to respond to questions from forum attendees.

According to Trustee Anne Demartini, “I want to assure the community that all four candidates were carefully considered. I didn’t know who I would vote for on Tuesday when we conducted interviews. I thoughtfully considered the strengths and weaknesses of each candidate and as our selection process evolved gradually, it became apparent that there were two leading candidates. After much

discussion, the Board determined that Dr. Williams was the best fit for YCCD. We felt he can and will inspire staff and the community and we have great expectations that he will lead our colleges in fulfilling our mission of serving students. I congratulate Jim and truly look forward to working with him as our new Chancellor.”

YCCD has had only three top administrators since MJC and Columbia College 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), then Dr. Pamila Fisher (1992-2004).

The District covers a 4,500 square mile area and serves a population of over 550,000, encompassing all of two counties (Stanislaus and Tuolumne) and parts of 4 others (Calaveras, Merced, San Joaquin, Santa Clara). The District student body is diverse with ethnic student bodies comprising 46% serving approximately 29,000 students, a staff of over 1,300 and an annual budget of over \$100 million.

Trustee Pat Dean summed up that “Dr. Williams is a wonderful choice. He is a perfect fit for our college district. He's well educated, calm, an excellent listener and very ethical.”

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