



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Contact: Nick Stavrianoudakis, Director of Public Affairs: (209)575-6959, stavrianoudakis@yosemite.edu

New President Selected for Modesto Junior College

MODESTO, CA – Dr. Gaither Loewenstein has accepted an offer by the Yosemite Community College District (YCCD) Board of Trustees to be the new president of Modesto Junior College (MJC) effective July 1, 2010. Loewenstein will replace interim MJC President Dr. Kenneth White, who will be returning to his previous position with the college. The decision by the YCCD Board was unanimous, Board Chair Pat Dean announced.

Loewenstein is currently Vice President of Norco College in the Riverside Community College District jurisdiction. He has over 16 years experience as a college administrator, 11 in the California community college system and the last four as Vice President at Norco. Prior to serving at Norco, he worked in higher educational administration at the College of the Desert (Palm Desert, CA), Barstow Community College (Barstow, CA), and Mendocino College (Ukiah, CA).

Dr. Loewenstein also has Central Valley roots. He was the Dean of Instruction at Humphrey's College in Stockton, and worked as an Advance Planner for San Joaquin County and Planning Director for the City of Escalon. His university teaching experience includes being an Assistant Professor of Political Science/Assistant Director of the Center for Urban and Public Affairs at Wright State University in Dayton, OH, and Assistant Professor of Government at Lamar University in Beaumont, TX. In between his valley positions and professorships, he also worked in the private sector for four years as a Senior Planner for Neal Martin & Associates in San Carlos, CA.

Yosemite Community College District (YCCD) Chancellor Roe Darnell and the Board of Trustees interviewed three finalists for the position last week. All three finalists presented to the greater college community two weeks prior at MJC Presidential Forums. YCCD Board Chair Pat Dean formally announced Dr. Loewenstein as MJC's next President at the YCCD Board of Trustees meeting on March 26, 2010.

"My wife, Hope, and I are absolutely thrilled to be coming home to the Central Valley and joining the MJC team. I came away from the interview process extremely impressed with the quality of the faculty, staff and management team at the College and am very much looking forward to getting to know the students as well," said Dr. Loewenstein.

According to Chancellor Darnell, "I am delighted to have Dr. Gaither Loewenstein join the Yosemite Community College District as President of Modesto Junior College. During a time when we are challenged by budget constraints his experiences in accreditation processes, student learning support, and curriculum will help MJC continue to serve our communities well."

Loewenstein received his Ph.D. from the University of Delaware (1983) in Urban Affairs. He received his Masters Degree from Wichita State University (1980), also in Urban Affairs. His Bachelor of Science degree is from the University of the Pacific (1979) B.S. in Public Administration.

Board Chair Pat Dean affirmed Chancellor Darnell's praise by saying that, "Dr. Loewenstein should be a very good addition to Modesto Junior College as President, not only bringing vast community college experience, but also a positive work history in the private sector. During these difficult and sometimes trying times, I welcome him to our District and look forward to working with him to continue the great history of student success that MJC is known for.

At Norco College, the newest community college in California's 112 college system, Loewenstein experienced the transformation of Norco "center" into Norco "college" – a time consuming process. His experience to that end should prove useful for Modesto Junior College with plans to establish MJC satellite educational outreach sites in Patterson and Turlock in future years. While at Norco, Loewenstein also led the college through a rigorous accreditation review process. There are many more challenges for Loewenstein in his new position.

According to Loewenstein, "These are extremely challenging times for California community colleges in general and for Modesto Junior College in particular. Our upcoming fall 2011 accreditation visit, the ongoing budget shortfall at the state level, and the current state of the economy in Modesto and the surrounding region are among the more significant challenges we will be taking on once I assume office in July. I'm confident that by working together our team can weather the budget storm, achieve reaffirmation of the College's accreditation and continue to make a positive contribution to the revitalization of the local economy."

Loewenstein's selection comes after a nationwide search conducted internally and chaired by YCCD Chancellor Darnell. The search began in fall 2009 and produced 40 qualified candidates. After interviews, the pool was further narrowed to three finalists, who participated in campus forums held at MJC during the first week of March.

Modesto Junior College is one of the first community colleges established in California in 1921. MJC's fall 2009 enrollment was 19,581 (unduplicated headcount). Modesto Junior College along with Columbia College comprise the Yosemite Community College District (YCCD). YCCD is one of 72 community college districts that make up the California Community College System – the largest system of higher education in the world, serving nearly three million students each year.