



Press Release

YOSEMITE COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT
Modesto Junior College & Columbia College

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New MJC President Bandyopadhyay reinforces commitment to college, community during meetings with YCCD trustees

MODESTO, CA – In a series of discussions with Yosemite Community College District trustees this week, incoming Modesto Junior College President Dr. Santanu Bandyopadhyay reaffirmed his commitment to students, staff and the community. Bandyopadhyay's contract, which had a year remaining, was extended by two additional years. He pledged to fulfill that contract "for the full term."

Trustees voted 4-2 on May 12 to offer the MJC job to Bandyopadhyay, who began his new duties June 1. He had been the college's Acting and then Interim President since January. However, some MJC employees and community members wondered why, after accepting MJC's offer, Bandyopadhyay did not immediately remove himself from consideration for the presidency of Citrus Community College in Southern California, where he was eventually a finalist. Though he later did withdraw, questions were raised about Bandyopadhyay's loyalty to MJC.

Bandyopadhyay met with trustees and Chancellor Henry Yong prior to the board meeting Wednesday afternoon.

"Open communication is the key for any successful relationship to thrive," Bandyopadhyay said. "I am thankful that all the trustees and Chancellor Yong made time to meet with me and provide me the opportunity to have an honest conversation. I appreciate the trust and confidence they have shown me. I am looking forward to a bright future where MJC can reach new heights in its centennial year serving the students and the community, reopen the campus with a focus on equity and build partnerships with other institutions of higher education and businesses."

Yong reiterated his support for Bandyopadhyay on Wednesday, saying he remains "fully confident" of his ability "to lead MJC to excellence."

“Dr. Bandyopadhyay has already reached out to community partners seeking more opportunities in collaboration,” Yong said. “He will engage the community, and the community can expect MJC to be more accessible and responsive to community needs under his leadership.”

YCCD Board Chairwoman Margie Bulkin said trustees remain confident in the new president.

“Dr. Bandyopadhyay has the leadership skills and institutional knowledge necessary to support and advance Modesto Junior College’s academic quality and effectiveness for the wide variety of programs and services offered at the college, and to reinforce the pride that our community has for so long demonstrated for the college,” Bulkin said. “We are optimistic about the community outreach and partnerships Dr. Bandyopadhyay has already launched.”

Bandyopadhyay said he has shared his vision for MJC with the staff. His goals include:

- Building a strong partnership with Modesto City Schools and other school districts to ensure that students have the opportunity to complete at least 15 college credits before they graduate from high school.
- Developing a pathway with UC Merced and CSU Stanislaus where students can transfer from MJC upon completion of an associate degree and get a world-class baccalaureate degree in the valley with minimal student debt.
- Establishing centers of excellence to improve teaching and learning in the post-pandemic era.
- Fostering collaboration with local businesses and industry for job preparedness.
- Partnering with civic organizations to address issues such as mental health, food insecurity and shelter insecurity.

“I will strive to accomplish these goals and reassess the situation once we reach these goals to carve out the path forward,” Bandyopadhyay said.

Prior to assuming interim and acting presidential responsibilities at MJC earlier this year, Bandyopadhyay had been the President of YCCD’s other institution -- Columbia College in Tuolumne County -- since July 2018. Together, MJC and Columbia serve more than 25,000 students. About 22,000 of them attend classes at MJC’s East and West campuses in Modesto.

MJC is California’s 16th-oldest community college and will celebrate its 100th anniversary this fall. In efforts to kick-off the centennial celebration, Dr. Bandyopadhyay donated his \$5K past performance bonus to the MJC Foundation.

Bandyopadhyay has more than 23 years of experience in higher education. He came to Columbia from Cypress College in Orange County, where he spent nearly a decade as first the Director of Institutional Research and Planning and then as Executive Vice President.

Before moving to Southern California, he was the Director of Institutional Research at Zane State College in Ohio and Budget and Policy Analyst at Ohio University. He also spent four years teaching computer science at the National Institute of Information Technology.

In addition to his college administrative and teaching experience, Bandyopadhyay also has been involved in national initiatives such as Achieving the Dream, Foundations of Excellence and Survey of Entering Student Engagement.

Bandyopadhyay earned a doctorate in higher education from Ohio University, an M.B.A. from Ohio University and a bachelor of science in physics from Kolkata University in India.

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