



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Dr. Lena Tran selected as new Columbia College President

MODESTO, CA – Dr. Lena Tran will be the next president of Columbia Community College. Her selection was unanimously approved Wednesday (Feb. 9) by the Yosemite Community College District Board of Trustees.

Tran comes to Columbia from San Jose City College, where she has served as Vice President of Strategic Partnerships and Workforce Innovation for 4½ years. Previously, at Evergreen College in San Jose, she was Dean of Business and Workforce Development, as well as Interim Dean of Social Science, Humanities, Arts and Physical Education. She also has worked for the University of California's Silicon Valley Extension, as well as in marketing and sales roles in that region.

“Dr. Tran has a strong track record of developing strategic partnerships with K-12 schools, universities, and business and industry,” said YCCD Chancellor Henry Yong, citing Tran’s experience working with companies such as Microsoft, LinkedIn, Google, Honda, IDT, Facebook and Samsung.

Columbia serves about 4,000 students, mostly from Tuolumne and Calaveras counties. In addition to its academic programs, it offers many highly regarded vocational programs, including culinary arts and hospitality as well as forestry and natural resource management.

Tran was selected from a field of five finalists, all of whom met with Columbia staff, students and members of the public during candidate forums in December. Her first day will be March 7.

“I am honored and humbled to accept this wonderful appointment, and I’m excited to begin working together with Columbia College and the Sonora community,” Tran said. “During my service in higher education, I’ve realized that community colleges are accomplishing something extraordinary in America through their positive impact on the lives of the people we serve. The opportunity to work with multicultural groups of college students over the last decade has given me a profound appreciation and respect for the benefits that community colleges are bringing to our society.”

In the past 26 years, Tran is proud to have formed partnerships with many of the world's leading tech companies. Those relationships, she believes, are critical for students competing in today's job market.

"I see my role as helping to design fresh, responsive programs, educational pathways, and student services that will open unprecedented resources, services and employment opportunities for our students," she said.

YCCD Board Chairman Darin Gharat said, "Dr. Tran's background and experience in preparing students for many careers that are increasingly dependent upon technology will benefit Columbia College." In addition, Margie Bulkin, YCCD Trustee Area 1 shared that "Dr. Tran is uniquely qualified to support Columbia College's interest in collaborating with local businesses and employers in supporting workforce development strategies that meet the economic needs of our region and to leverage college resources in order to create an educational pathway to living wage job-opportunities which allow all students to thrive."

Tran also said the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on community college students and staff cannot be ignored.

"I see my role as helping to design fresh, responsive programs, educational pathways, and student services that will open unprecedented resources, services, and employment opportunities for our students," Tran said. "To help our students, we will continue to provide high-touch support services, and connect with students who've dropped out and haven't re-registered for classes since the pandemic to find out how we can assist them with the basic necessities of life, including food insecurities, employment, mental wellness and housing. We will also vigorously support our faculty with the resources and training for online teaching."

Tran's educational background includes a Doctorate in Education in Organizational and Leadership Development from the University of San Francisco, a Master of Business Administration in Entrepreneurship and Marketing from Seton Hall University, and a Bachelor of Science in International Business and Marketing, from Montclair State University in New Jersey.

In addition, she was an Aspen Rising President Fellow for 2021. She has received the Stanford Educational Leadership Initiative Award, California Forward 2018 Award, and the John and Suanne Roueche Excellence Award. Tran was a Fulbright Scholar in 2016 and named among the 100 Women

of Influence in Silicon Valley (2015), and the Silicon Valley Business Journal listed her among its “Top 40 under 40 List” (2012).

At Columbia, she will succeed Dr. G.H. Javaheripour, who has served as Interim President since January 2021 when Dr. Santanu Bandyopadhyay, Columbia’s former President, was named to the same role at Modesto Junior College. Bandyopadhyay was hired full time at MJC in June 2021.



Dr. Lena Tran

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