



Press Release

YOSEMITE COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT
Modesto Junior College & Columbia College

No. 23-11

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: November 20, 2023

PHOTOS ATTACHED

Contact: Chancellor's Office: (209) 575-6509, publicaffairs@yosemite.edu

CORRECTIONS

4 finalists identified in search for next MJC President

MODESTO, CA. – The search for the next full-time president at Modesto Junior College has produced a list of four finalists, after the conclusion of the first level or semi-final interviews, it was announced Monday by Dr. Henry Yong, Chancellor of the Yosemite Community College District.

The finalists are:

- **Dr. John al-Amin**
(Vice Chancellor for Finance and Administration, City College of San Francisco – San Francisco, CA)
- **Dr. Lilia Chavez**
(Vice President of Student Services, Merritt College – Oakland, CA)
- **Dr. Lisa Cooper Wilkins**
(Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs, City College of San Francisco – San Francisco, CA)
- **Dr. Brian Sanders**
(Interim Vice President of Instruction, Modesto Junior College – Modesto, CA)

The finalists will be invited to Modesto the week of Nov. 27 for interviews with the finalist search committee, and to participate in public forums. **The forums will be held in-person in the Yosemite Community College District Board Room, located at 2201 Blue Gum Avenue in Modesto.** Members of the community are invited to attend the finalist forums, and may park in any of the student parking lots for free. **A live video stream option will also be available.**

Yong will chair the final level committee. Other members include Jeffrey Lewis, President and CEO of Legacy Health Endowment in Turlock, and Trevor Stewart, Vice Chancellor for District Administrative Services for the YCCD, both whom served as co-chairs of the 17-member first level/semi-finalist search committee.

The final panel will also include four other members of the community; the Interim President of Stanislaus State and Chancellor of UC Merced, or their designees; Rita Menezes, the Principal of Ceres High School, a feeder high school to MJC; and Bill Mattos, the President of the California Poultry Federation and long-time West Side resident.



Dr. Lilia Chavez

Forum Date/Time: November 27, 2023, 9:15 a.m. – 10:15 a.m.

Forum Location: YCCD Board Room

[Link to Forum](#)

(<https://www.youtube.com/@yosemitecommunitycollegedi8320>)

Dr. Lilia Chavez currently serves as the Vice President of Student Services at Merritt College in Oakland. She is committed to collaborating with underrepresented, underprepared and underserved communities. In her current role, she secured a \$3 million Hispanic Serving Institute grant from the Department of Education for Merritt. She also worked at San Francisco State University and spent more than 10 years as a college teacher, when she designed culturally sensitive leadership programs and emphasized social justice, human transformation and student success at all levels. Dr. Chavez holds a doctoral degree in International & Multicultural Education, a Master's in Rehabilitation Counseling and a Bachelor's in liberal arts.



Dr. Lisa Cooper Wilkins

Forum Date/Time: November 27, 2023, 10:25 a.m. – 11:25 a.m.

Forum Location: YCCD Board Room

[Link to Forum](#)

(<https://www.youtube.com/@yosemitecommunitycollegedi8320>)

Dr. Lisa Cooper Wilkins currently serves as the Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs at City College of San Francisco. She believes it is her responsibility to advance authentic conversations about race to make systemic changes that will close the opportunity gaps impacting our communities most vulnerable members, and her career has emphasized access, diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging. Her previous positions include Assistant Superintendent/Vice President of Student Services at Delta College in Stockton, Dean of Academic Affairs at Community College of Philadelphia, Assistant Vice President for Diversity & Community Engagement at University of Pacific (UOP) and Interim Assistant Provost at UOP. Dr. Cooper Wilkins holds a doctorate in Higher Education Administration from George Washington University; a master's degree in Psychological Services from Marymount University; a master's degree in Counseling and Human Relations from Villanova

University, and a bachelor's degree in History and International Relations from Goucher College. She is the recipient of the National Association of Student Affairs Professionals (NASPA) 2023 Region VI Scott Goodnight Award for Outstanding Performance as a Vice President of Student Affairs, the Education Champion Award in 2018 from the San Joaquin Pride Center and the NAACP's Medgar Evers Freedom Fighter Award in 2017.



Dr. John al-Amin

Forum Date/Time: November 27, 2023, 2:15 p.m. – 3:15 p.m.

Forum Location: YCCD Board Room

[Link to Forum](#)

(<https://www.youtube.com/@yosemitecommunitycollegedi8320>)

Dr. John al-Amin currently serves as the Vice Chancellor for Finance and Administration for the City College of San Francisco. In that role, he provides management and direction over district business and accounting operations, risk management, facilities construction and planning, buildings and grounds services, police and safety, and informational technology services. He has earned degrees in Economics (BA), Educational Administration (MA), Public Policy (EMPA), and Management (Ph.D.). Dr. al-Amin also has worked in the California State University, and the University of California systems in roles related to instruction, student services and administrative services.



Dr. Brian Sanders

Forum Date/Time: November 27, 2023, 3:25 p.m. – 4:25 p.m.

Forum Location: YCCD Board Room

[Link to Forum](#)

(<https://www.youtube.com/@yosemitecommunitycollegedi8320>)

Dr. Brian Sanders currently serves as the Interim Vice President for Instruction for Modesto Junior College and has served in teaching and administrative roles in the district for nearly 30 years. In his current role, Sanders has celebrated the diversity of the MJC community, championed expansion of dual enrollment and the nursing program, trained new deans and directors, implemented the college's transition from divisions to schools as a key component of Guided Pathways, improved the online catalog and deployed Program Mapper to guide students' journeys. He also has helped the college with community outreach in various ways. He began in the district in 1994 as a math instructor and later became Dean of the Science, Math and Engineering division. He then served as Vice President for Instruction at Columbia College, YCCD's other campus. Dr. Sanders holds a doctorate in Educational Leadership from a joint program of the University of California, Davis and Sonoma State

University; a master's degree in Mathematics from the University of Oregon, Eugene; and a bachelor's degree in Mathematical Sciences from the University of California, Santa Barbara.

Following the conclusion of the finalist forums, the Chancellor looks forward to receiving input from forum attendees. Yong is expected to recommend a finalist to the YCCD Board of Trustees for consideration in early December, with the goal of announcing the next president of MJC by Dec. 13. The new leader is expected to take over early in 2024. Dr. Chad Redwing has served as MJC's interim president since February, and will be returning to the faculty ranks.

This is the second time this year the district has conducted a search for a full-time president, which has attracted more interest from applicants. No candidate was selected from the prior search. Yong expresses sincere thanks to those who served on the first level search committee, noting that they were making a big investment of their time and effort for MJC's future.

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