

2009 JOHN W. RICE DIVERSITY AND EQUITY AWARD

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SPECIAL PRESENTATION

Presentation: Lance Izumi, President, Board of Governors
Jack Scott, Chancellor, California Community Colleges

Issue

This item honors former Board of Governors member Dr. John W. Rice by recognizing this year's two recipients of the *2009 John W. Rice Diversity and Equity Award*.

Background

The *John W. Rice Diversity and Equity Award* was established in 2001 to honor a community college staff member, district, college, or program that has made the greatest contribution towards faculty and staff diversity or student equity.

This award is named in honor of former Board of Governors member Dr. John W. Rice. He served on the Board from 1992-2000 and was a leader, innovator, and spokesperson for equal employment opportunity and nondiscrimination in the California Community Colleges. This award is named in his behalf as a testament to his strong commitment to faculty and staff diversity, student equity, and his strong support for a multicultural learning experience for all students.

Staff from the community colleges and the Chancellor's Office served on the selection committee. There were many nominees and the decision was difficult but the two recipients clearly demonstrated outstanding achievement in diversity and student equity.

As our system continues to grow, it is important to understand diversity as an issue of representation and process. Demographically, we are serving the most diverse student population in the history of California's community colleges. Learning to facilitate the needs of our emerging student body through staff training and professional development increases the probability that our students will be successful. With this commitment and the tireless efforts of our administrators, faculty, staff, and students, we can make progress on the vision that Dr. Rice

saw for the California Community Colleges. This year's recipients represent an important combination of strategies that express our resolve to faculty and staff diversity and student equity and success.

The 2009 program award winners are **Early Start Program** from Los Angeles Valley College and **Cultural Democracy and Diversity Program** from Sacramento City College. Below is a short description of their programs and some of their highlighted accomplishments (from their nomination form and further research).

Early Start Program (Los Angeles Valley College): Early Start is a program that prepares underrepresented high school students attending an underperforming school (John Frances Polytechnic High School) to complete the rigorous academic coursework required for entrance into the University of California (UC) higher education system. For 10 years (1999 to present), Los Angeles Valley College has funded the program, enrolling a cohort of juniors and seniors into the program with amazing results.

- 100 percent or all of the 320 Early Start students have gone on to a myriad of prestigious universities including Harvard, Yale, Stanford, MIT, Dartmouth, Cornell, Duke, John Hopkins, Brandeis, Bowdoin, UC Berkeley, UCLA, and many other prestigious universities or colleges.
- Early Start has just received word its 10th student has been admitted to MIT. This means 32 percent of all Early Start students have enrolled at or graduated from MIT. MIT receives 15,000 to 17,000 applications each year and admits only 15 percent or 2,250 to 2,550 of all applicants.
- Over 90 percent of the students in the program are on the free or reduced school lunch program. Most come from economically disadvantaged homes and are English language learners.
- Early Start students are passing their California High School Exit Exam at an extremely high rate (98 percent for language arts and 95 percent for math) on their first attempt.
- The program has created a fundamental cultural shift at John Frances Polytechnic High School. In the 10 years that we have been at Poly, more than twice as many students (43 percent vs. 15 percent) have completed the A-G subject area (history/social science, English, math, science, foreign language, visual and performing arts, and college preparation elective classes) entrance requirements for the University of California. The number of A-G completers keeps increasing every year.
- The Academic Senate has strongly embraced this program and has expanded two new high schools to the program.
- Eight high schools have requested to participate in this program.

- The Early Start Program has significantly changed the lives of all of the 320 students who have succeeded in higher education and have become shining stars.

Cultural Democracy and Diversity Program (Sacramento City College (SCC)): Through numerous workshops, activities, and conferences, the Cultural Democracy Initiative (CDI) has created opportunities for individuals to recognize their own cultural perspectives and presumptions and to examine how those factors influence the ways that people interact with others who have cultural backgrounds different from their own. CDI facilitates organizational change and compliments other college efforts (Cultural Awareness Center and International Studies) to help transform our institutional culture to be consistent with the college vision of being a learning environment that celebrates diversity in all its forms. Further, the initiative is providing the opportunity for the institution to assess its infrastructure, policies, and practices, reduce cultural biases, and work toward increasing the retention, academic performance and graduation rates of SCC students from diverse populations.

- Sponsored “Beyond Diversity” Workshops and Courageous Conversations which had over 250 participants included faculty, staff, and students.
- During the 2008-09 academic year, 72 workshops designed to expand cultural perspectives with 1,355 attendees. For example, one workshop focused on how to integrate diversity into the hiring process. In spring 2008, SCC led the district in hiring faculty from diverse backgrounds.
- The fall 2008 Student Accreditation Survey asked students to evaluate the statement *The college demonstrates an understanding of and concern for issues of fairness and diversity*. Results from the 400 respondents show 87 percent either agreed or agreed strongly with this statement, an increase of 4.8 percent over the results of the survey administered as part of the 2002 accreditation study.
- SCC hosted the Faculty Association of California Community College’s first statewide community college diversity conference. More than 200 participants from 32 community colleges and 22 districts statewide attended this event. The statewide Academic Senate stated in the May 2009 Senate Rostrum; they will hold their own institute on equity and diversity in February 2010.
- The Associate Student Government sponsored a workshop entitled *Bridging the Cultural Gap between Students and Staff*. This workshop brought together over 100 students faculty and staff to examine how to build positive relationships with students by just talking to them and engaging them in conversations that could reduce cultural bias, superiority perceptions, attrition, and behavioral issues.

All of the past and present *John W. Rice Awards* and ceremony expenses have been generously supported by the Foundation for California Community Colleges. Each recipient will receive a commemorative award.

Conclusion

The Board of Governors, the Foundation for California Community Colleges, Mrs. Clara Rice, the Honorable Condoleezza Rice, and many invited dignitaries will honor former Board member Dr. John W. Rice and recognize the **Early Start Program** from Los Angeles Valley College and the **Cultural Democracy and Diversity Program** from Sacramento City College.

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