



CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGES

S Y S T E M O F F I C E

For Immediate Release

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Yuba College Professor and Cosumnes River College Program Honored Today

SACRAMENTO – A Yuba College professor and a Cosumnes River College seminar program were honored earlier today at the California Community Colleges Board of Governors (BOG) meeting for making the greatest contribution towards faculty and staff diversity or student equity.

“Thank you for continuing to honor my father by presenting the eighth annual *John W. Rice Diversity and Equity Award* to Professor Neelam Canto-Lugo of Yuba College and to Cosumnes River College’s Freshman seminar class,” Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice wrote in a letter to BOG President Lance Izumi. “My father would be so proud to know that such talented individuals and organizations are improving education in his name.”

The two Rice Awards, represented in a black gilded falcon with a black glass disc nestled under the wing, were presented to honor the memory of the late John W. Rice, who tirelessly advocated for equity in the California community colleges when he served on the Board of Governors from 1992 to 2000.

All of the past and present *John W. Rice Diversity and Equity Awards* have been generously supported by the Foundation for California Community Colleges. “I am also grateful to the Foundation for California Community Colleges for their generous support,” the Rice letter stated. “Its continued devotion to the noble causes of diversity, equity, and student access have helped promote non-discrimination as well as improve the higher educational system of California.”

Professor Canto-Lugo initiated a Crossing Borders and Building Bridges Event Series. This successful series includes diverse speakers from within the Yuba College faculty, community members and statewide professionals such as poets, writers, dancers, artists, actors, religious leaders, veterans, survivors and refugees. The broad spectrum of the series has been diverse and has infused diversity of thought at Yuba College through the students, staff, faculty, and administration and has been measured by the numerous attendees of the workshop.

“Professor Canto-Lugo’s tireless efforts to create an environment in which we can all learn from each other and develop increasing levels of cultural competency and sensitivity are something of which we are all extremely proud,” said Dr. Nicki Harrington, Yuba Community College District Chancellor. “We are firmly committed to sustain and expand upon her endeavors with diversity, as is noted in the Strategic Directions of our Board of Trustees and by the District’s recently adopted Diversity Framework,” she added.

During the fall 2006 semester, Cosumnes River College (CRC) introduced a new one unit Learner-centered Freshman Seminar designed to increase the academic success of entering 18 – 20 year old freshmen, particularly at-risk students. This highly interactive course demystifies the college culture and experience by providing timely information at critical points in the semester. It focuses on the language, terminology, expectations, and customs of the college environment, and assists students in identifying the transferable skills they bring with them that can be applied to the college culture. Topics covered include: Creative Problem Solving, Academic Integrity, Deciphering College Publications, Money & Time Management, Expectations for Classroom Behavior, and more.

“The people that do the heavy lifting and make these academic interventions work are our faculty members. They work hard on behalf of the students,” said Dr. Francisco Rodriguez, President, Cosumnes River College. “Our college is very honored by this award and will use it to strengthen our resolve to better serve community college students,” he said.

Clara Rice attended this morning’s ceremony and fondly recalled the memory of her late husband. Thanking everyone for continuing to support the *2008 John W. Rice Diversity and Equity Award*, she predicted that Condoleezza Rice might be able to attend next year.

Prior *John W. Rice Diversity and Equity Award* recipients were: **2007**, Cabrillo College’s Digital Bridge Academy and Sacramento City College’s Respect, Integrity and Self-Determination through Education program; **2006**, Don Dorsey, Dean, Student Affairs & Activities, Foothill College, the San Jose/Evergreen Community College District, and Riverside Community College District; **2005**, Charles West of Bakersfield College and Abel Nunez of Taft College; **2004**, Dr. Nadine Hata of El Camino College, Earnest Moreno of East Los Angeles College, and Sierra College; **2003**, Dr. Dibaker Barua of Golden West College and Cabrillo College; **2002**, Dr. Brenda Flyswithhawks of Santa Rosa Junior College and Pam Chao of American River College; and **2001**, George Ow, Jr. of Cabrillo College.

For more information, click on [2008 John W. Rice Diversity and Equity Awards](#).

The California Community Colleges is the largest higher educational system in the nation comprised of 72 districts and 110 colleges with more than 2.6 million students per year. Community colleges supply workforce training and basic skills education, prepare students for transfer to four-year institutions and offer opportunities for personal enrichment and lifelong learning. The System Office provides leadership, advocacy and support under the direction of the Board of Governors of the California Community Colleges. For more information about the community colleges system, please visit <http://www.cccco.edu/>

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