



CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGES

CHANCELLOR'S OFFICE

PRESS RELEASE

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California Community Colleges Board of Governors Honors Five with 2013 Classified Employee of the Year Award

Annual award showcases dedication and hard work of thousands of college support staff

SACRAMENTO, Calif. -- The California Community Colleges Board of Governors named Cathie Browning, Kathy Chaika, Don Eckmann, Juan Patino and Rena Pheng as 2013 California Community Colleges Classified Employees of the Year and will honor them at the May 7 board of governors meeting in Sacramento.

The award has been given annually since 2009 to community college classified employees who demonstrate the highest level of commitment to professionalism and the community colleges. Recipients are nominated by members of their college or district community and endorsed by local boards of trustees. Award recipients are selected by representatives of the California Community Colleges Board of Governors, the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office, and the Foundation for California Community Colleges. Recipients must have a record of outstanding performance on the job, as well as a record of active participation on campus and in their respective communities. Each recipient receives a \$500 cash award and a commemorative plaque.

"The valuable work that our community colleges do for the state of California each year cannot be accomplished without the efforts of these fine people, our classified employee awards winners for 2013," said California Community Colleges Board of Governors member Danny Hawkins, a technical services supervisor for the San Jose Evergreen Community College District. "Students don't always see these valuable employees because they often work behind-the-scenes, but their work is felt and they are all held in high esteem. My congratulations to each of our winners and to those who were nominated."

Cathie Browning is an Information Technology Assistant II at American River College (ARC) and has been with the district for 14 years. Kathy Chaika is a Senior Accounting Technician at City College of San Mateo and has been with the district for 29 years. Don Eckmann is a Supervisor in Facilities Services at Pasadena City College and has been with the district for 25 years. Juan Patino is a Grounds Maintenance Worker at Santa Barbara City College and has been with the district for 25 years. Rena Pheng is a Custodian at Long Beach City College and has been with the district for seven years.

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Here is some background information on each winner:

Cathie Browning, American River College, Los Rios Community College District (Sacramento)

Browning's work in the integrated planning process at American River College helps faculty and staff make use of program review and the educational master plan as instruments for improving academic programs and student support services. She assisted with the writing and documentation of the college's accreditation Student Learning Outcomes Proficiency Report, and the document was a testament to her professionalism and attention to detail, American River College's nomination form stated. Browning participated in several organizations and committees on campus including the Learning Outcomes Assessment Committee, Planning Coordination Committee, the Classified Senate and the Los Rios Community College District Interest Based Alliance Steering Committee.

Kathy Chaika, College of San Mateo, San Mateo Community College District

Chaika serves on the Budget Planning Committee, Presidents Council and the Classified Events Planning Committee, which raises money for student scholarships. Chaika has volunteered for the Boys & Girls Club, Police Activities League and the Pony League. Chaika and her family also take in abandoned and/or abused teenagers and provide them with assistance and a safe place to stay.

Don Eckmann, Pasadena City College, Pasadena Area Community College District

Students, faculty, staff and visitors to Pasadena City College can see Eckmann's work all across campus from the maintenance of the renowned mirrored pools to the Child Development Center. Those who nominated Eckmann said he works diligently to make sure the campus is a beautiful and safe environment for everyone including students and staff. He volunteers his time by assisting construction technology instructors, helping build birdhouses for the children in the Child Development Center and welcoming veterans at the airport as they return from deployment. Eckmann also is the 2013 recipient of the Pasadena City College Risser Award for Outstanding Support for Education.

Juan Patino, Santa Barbara City College, Santa Barbara Community College District

Like Don Eckmann, helps to provide a beautiful, safe and clean environment on his campus that serves as the backdrop for teaching and learning at the college. He actively participates in the Emergency Preparedness and Safety Marshall Program. His nomination form said Patino's "lead-by-example approach to his daily work activities encourages his colleagues to aspire to the same level of commitment, dedication and contribution."

Rena Pheng, Long Beach City College, Long Beach Community College District

Pheng is described by her nominators as a role model, upbeat, professional, a leader and hardworking. "She is a trusted employee who takes pride in her job, always goes the extra mile and works hard to make sure that everything runs smoothly at the college," her nominators said. Pheng is a student at California State University, Dominguez Hills, works full-time at Long Beach City College yet still finds the time to volunteer at Meals on Wheels and Catered Manor Nursing Home.

"I want to congratulate each of these fine employees for a job well done and I want to thank every classified

employee within our system for the work they do each and every day on our 112 campuses and at the district offices,” said California Community Colleges Board of Governors President Manuel Baca. “As a professor myself, I know the value of our classified staff. They serve as valuable conduits of information between administrators, staff and faculty and they facilitate learning by making sure our campuses are safe and easy to navigate. We should take the time to thank these professionals for the work they do in helping our students succeed.”

The [California Community Colleges](#) is the largest system of higher education in the nation. It is composed of 72 districts and 112 colleges serving 2.4 million students per year. Community colleges supply workforce training, basic skills courses in English and math, and prepare students for transfer to four-year colleges and universities. The Chancellor’s Office provides leadership, advocacy and support under the direction of the Board of Governors of the California Community Colleges.

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