



### PRESS RELEASE

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### **Dr. John W. Rice Award Presented to California Community Colleges Program and Employee Exemplifying Diversity and Equity at Ceremony Today** *Former Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice Delivered Keynote Address*

SACRAMENTO, Calif. – The 14<sup>th</sup> Annual Dr. John W. Rice Diversity & Equity Award ceremony was held today at The Sterling Hotel in Sacramento and honored a college program and administrator whose work has fostered student equity, diversity, and access in the California Community Colleges system.

The 2014 Dr. John W. Rice Diversity & Equity Award, named after a former member of the California Community Colleges Board of Governors, was given to Chaffey College's Online to College program and Mt. San Antonio College's Dr. Audrey Yamagata-Noji. Online to College aims to increase college attendance rates of youth in the city of Montclair and Yamagata-Noji is noted for creating numerous programs which provide mentorship and tutoring services for underrepresented student groups. Mt. San Antonio College is located in Walnut, Calif. and Chaffey College is located in Rancho Cucamonga, Calif.

"For my father, being a part of the community college system was not just a profession but it was a passion and indeed a mission and a calling," said Condoleezza Rice, former U.S. Secretary of State and Dr. John W. Rice's daughter. "To him, there was nothing more valuable than a high quality education. He recognized that education is not a right, it's a privilege and that someone stood up for him and that he must stand up for others."

Dr. John W. Rice served on the board from 1992 until his death in 2000. While on the board, he displayed a strong commitment to multicultural learning experiences for all students.

"I extend my most heartfelt congratulations to the staff of the Online to College program and to Dr. Audrey Yamagata-Noji," said California Community Colleges Board of Governors President Manuel Baca. "Dr. John W. Rice wanted all community college students to be treated equally, fairly, and with respect. All he wanted was for everyone to have an equal chance at an education. The winners today want the same thing, and this award is our humble way of recognizing them for their achievements."

The award was established in 2001 to honor community college staff members, districts, colleges, or programs that have made the greatest contribution towards faculty, staff and student diversity and equity.

"Today's winners highlight the California Community Colleges steadfast commitment to diversity, equity, and access for all students," said California Community Colleges Chancellor Brice W. Harris. "Thanks to their work, students have had the support and encouragement they need to thrive in college, and young men and women who

may not have attended college are doing so. That is a record to be proud of.”

Born to a Presbyterian pastor in Baton Rouge, La., and living during segregation and the civil rights era, Dr. John W. Rice was passionate about ensuring California community college staff, faculty, and student body reflected the diversity of California and that support services were available to help students succeed. He was a leader, innovator, and spokesperson for nondiscrimination in the California Community Colleges system.

“We are proud to support the annual Dr. John W. Rice Awards and to celebrate such strong achievements in promoting diversity and equity throughout the California Community Colleges,” said Keetha Mills, president and CEO of the Foundation for California Community Colleges. “The California Community Colleges is the most diverse system of higher education in the nation, and the two winners we honor today are wonderful examples of its commitment to providing opportunity for all students.”

### ***About the Winners:***

#### **Online to College – Chaffey College**

Online to College enrolls fifth-grade students in its program and over eight years immerses them in a curriculum designed to teach the value of a college education. Students are taken on field trips to Chaffey College, attend college fairs, and listen to classroom presentations on the importance of continuing one’s education beyond high school. Not to be left out, the parents of enrollees attend workshops to help them learn the costs of attending college, the financial aid process, and the benefits of higher education for their children. At the end of their senior year of high school, students who have completed the program are offered a scholarship that pays the entire cost of attending Chaffey College for two years.

The program’s enrollees have significantly higher college attendance rates than their peers, higher test scores, and are more likely to remain in college than students who were not in the Online to College program.

#### **Dr. Audrey Yamagata-Noji – Mt. San Antonio College**

Yamagata-Noji is a superior state and national leader in the critical areas of diversity, equity, and access for all. In her roles as vice president of student services at Mt. San Antonio College, co-chair of her college’s Equity for All Initiative, and through her partnership with the Student Equity Initiative, Yamagata-Noji has been a forceful advocate and champion for student equity and for diversity issues. Her goal has been to provide students with equal access to educational opportunities, facilities, and resources that foster student success.

She established Mt. San Antonio College’s Bridge Program, regarded as a model for empowering freshmen entering at a basic skills level who have self-identified challenges and barriers to success. Ninety-eight percent of Summer Bridge students persist to the fall semester and achieve high completion rates. She also has developed Mt. San Antonio College’s Arise Program, which fosters basic skills completion, provides academic tutoring, counseling, and leadership skills development to underperforming Asian-American and Pacific Islander students. She was also instrumental in developing Aspire, a similar program tailored to improve completion and transfer rates for African-American students.

*The [California Community Colleges](#) is the largest system of higher education in the nation. It is composed of 72 districts and 112 colleges serving 2.1 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.*