



CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGES

CHANCELLOR'S OFFICE

PRESS RELEASE

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Dr. John W. Rice Award Presented to California Community Colleges Programs Exemplifying Diversity and Equity

SACRAMENTO, Calif. – The 17th Annual [Dr. John W. Rice Diversity & Equity Award](#) ceremony today honored two college programs whose work has promoted student equity, diversity and access in the California Community Colleges. The ceremony was held at the Crocker Art Museum.

The 2017 Dr. John W. Rice Diversity & Equity Award, named for a former member of the California Community Colleges Board of Governors, was handed out to American River College's Veterans Resource Center and Compton College's Formerly Incarcerated Student in Transition (F.I.S.T.) program. American River College is located in Sacramento and Compton College is located in Compton.

"The programs we honor today are some of the best the California Community Colleges has to offer when it comes to fostering student diversity, equity and social mobility," said California Community Colleges Board of Governors President Cecilia V. Estolano. "Dr. Rice knew education was a great equalizer and dedicated his life and career to ensuring all community college students be treated equally and fairly. This award is our way of recognizing the programs and employees that follow that great example."

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. 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.

"I extend my heartfelt congratulations to this year's award winners," said [Keetha Mills](#), president and CEO of the Foundation for California Community Colleges. "It's a great honor to support this annual event and have the opportunity to recognize the achievements in promoting diversity and equity throughout the California Community Colleges. "

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About the Winners:

Veterans Resource Center – American River College

The Veterans Resource Center is one of the most developed, well-staffed and fully institutionalized service programs for veterans in the state. Since its inception in 2013, the central mission of the Veterans Resource Center is to bridge the civilian and military cultural divide through inclusion, full integration of student veterans in campus life, while offering consistent training and engagement opportunities for staff, faculty and administration. Over the years, the Veterans Resource Center has also evolved to focus more broadly on encouraging diversity of this marginalized student population on campus, as well as supporting the statewide movement to integrate student veterans on campus and enhance overall support and services for our prior military, active duty personnel and military families. Veterans Resource Center strive to focus on the life issues affecting veterans, to help them become successful students.

Formerly Incarcerated Students in Transition (F.I.S.T.) Program –Compton College

The Formerly Incarcerated Students in Transition (F.I.S.T) program at Compton College provides academic, social and economic support for students reentering the community after incarceration. The program provides advising and counseling, peer mentoring, book loans and transportation assistance, while also offering strategies to navigate successfully life in an academic setting. After less than a year in existence, the program has grown into one of the most active clubs on campus, with 54 active student members, 16 of whom have GPAs greater than 3.0. Members participate in Associated Student Body meetings, volunteer at campus events and regularly participate in campus field trips. The F.I.S.T. program has helped formerly incarcerated students find confidence in themselves to beat the odds, defy stereotypes and thrive on campus.

The California Community Colleges is the largest system of higher education in the nation composed of 72 districts and 114 colleges serving 2.1 million students per year. Community colleges supply workforce training, basic skills education in English and math, and prepare students for transfer to four-year institutions. The Chancellor's 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, please visit <http://californiacommunitycolleges.cccco.edu/>, <https://www.facebook.com/CACommColleges>, or <https://twitter.com/CalCommColleges>.

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