



NEWS RELEASE

Contact: Laurie Weidner, APR
Executive Director,
Public Affairs/Governmental Relations
Phone: (714) 480-7509
E-mail: Weidner_laurie@rsccd.edu

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Rancho Santiago Community College District's Chancellor Announces Retirement *Dr. Hernandez is the longest-seated chancellor in CA*

(Santa Ana)—Edward Hernandez, Jr., Ed.D., chancellor of the Rancho Santiago Community College District (RSCCD), formally announced his retirement at a regularly scheduled meeting of the RSCCD Board of Trustees. Hernandez is the longest seated chancellor in the California Community College system, serving 13 years in his post. His retirement will be effective June 30, 2010. No plans have yet been made by the Board of Trustees to hire a replacement. A national search will likely be launched later this fall.

“The Rancho Santiago Community College District, the students and the community have reaped countless benefits as a result of Dr. Hernandez’ leadership. It is difficult to quantify his contributions because he has done so much for our students and district,” commended R. David Chapel, Ed.D., president of the Board of Trustees.

Throughout the chancellor’s tenure, the district has enjoyed close working relationships with employee union groups, which has created a strong internal culture based on open communication and teamwork. “I am proud of my long affiliation with the district and am convinced that the good work we have accomplished on behalf of students over the past 13 years has been as a result of our shared passion and fervent commitment to serving students. Working together as a unified team - the Board, administration, faculty, union leaders, student leaders, and staff – we have changed lives for the better and helped millions of central Orange County residents realize their dreams,” said Hernandez.

Hernandez, in concert with the Board, is credited with leading the district through its development into a multi-college district with two comprehensive campuses – Santa Ana and Santiago Canyon colleges – and a host of education centers, including Centennial Education Center and Orange Education Center, which provide adult continuing education and job training; the Orange County Sheriff’s Regional Training Academy, the flagship law enforcement training

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facility in the West; and the Digital Media Center, the first business/education complex in the City of Santa Ana's redevelopment zone housing the only digital media incubator in Orange County.

“Through the shared vision of the chancellor and Board, the college district is regarded as an educational innovator, which has initiated many industry ‘firsts,’” according to Board Vice President Larry R. Labrado, Sr. “When I think of Dr. Hernandez’ contribution to our college district and community colleges nationwide, I see him as a brave gladiator, who despite obstacles, continued to display tenacity and perseverance. With every achievement that we have celebrated as a district, Chancellor Hernandez has ‘gone to battle’ for the cause – which has always been to provide the best quality services and programs for students.”

“Thirteen years ago, we knew we had hired a winner when we selected Dr. Hernandez as chancellor,” noted Board Clerk Brian E. Conley, M.A., who served on the chancellor’s original hiring committee. “His consistent leadership has led the college district to become one of the largest and most highly regarded community college districts in the state.”

“Dr. Hernandez broadened the college district’s mission and created a comprehensive educational master plan, which expanded the district’s role in workforce training, economic development, and community engagement. He became a trusted and highly respected voice in both state and national higher educational circles regarding under-represented students and educational access. He advised the governor and key legislators on issues pertaining to community colleges, and served as the president of prestigious international educational associations. Through these professional endeavors, Dr. Hernandez enhanced the professional reputation of the district. RSCCD has not only been ‘at the table’ participating in critical conversations about the future of community colleges, but we also have helped to lead the discussion, thanks to Dr. Hernandez,” said Trustee John R. Hanna.

One such area of statewide leadership relates to the district’s workforce training and economic development programs, which benefit thousands of workers, business owners, and entrepreneurs each year. “Dr. Hernandez has always had a keen understanding of the role that community colleges play in keeping our local economy strong and vibrant. To that end, he built the college district’s workforce training and economic development programs to be among the most comprehensive in California to meet the needs of Orange County’s diverse business community,” commented Trustee Phillip E. Yarbrough.

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Early in his tenure as chancellor, Hernandez forged a first-time partnership with local workplace industry boards, became active in the Orange County Business Council, and became a member of the board of directors for local chambers of commerce. He brought the Orange County Small Business Development Center to the district headquarters, a program that provides free and affordable advisement and resources to entrepreneurs and small business owners. Over the years, the district expanded its economic development programs to include a wide range of free and affordable programs and services to the business and small business community, including programs – unique to the college district – which strengthen import/export businesses based here and working with Mexico.

According to Trustee Mark McLoughlin, Hernandez was among the first community college chancellors in Orange County to engage the community and business in community college district programs and services. Through his leadership, the district became active in many community and business organizations, and led community-wide initiatives to bolster access and attainment to educational opportunities for under-served students and families. “English Works, a unique partnership involving the college district, the Greater Santa Ana Business Alliance (GSABA) and community-based organizations, is striving to enroll 50,000 additional local residents in free ESL (English as Second Language) courses by 2012. Santa Ana College now offers free ESL courses seven days per week locations across the city. This is one example of the many win-win programs forged by the chancellor to improve the quality of life for residents within the district’s boundaries,” explained Trustee McLoughlin, who also serves on the Executive Board of the GSABA.

In order to bolster college attendance among Latino youth, Hernandez and other community leaders created KinderCaminata, a program which brings thousands of kindergartens each year onto college campuses to learn about the importance of attending college and working toward career goals. The program is now available cross the state.

Other exemplary partnerships include an off-campus nurse education program at St. Joseph Hospital, Orange, which benefits hospital employees and nursing students at SAC; partnerships with the Santa Ana (SAUSD) and Orange Unified School Districts, Orange Senior Center, the Orange Diocese, and many other churches, community-based organizations, and businesses to provide English instruction free to local residents across central Orange County;

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Middle College High School, a SAUSD high school located on SAC's campus which allows students to earn college units while completing their high school diplomas; and much more.

Finally, Hernandez, in concert with the Board, spearheaded an aggressive and far-reaching capital improvement program, funded by Measure E, a \$337 million general obligation bond that was unanimously approved by local voters in 2002. Through careful fiscal management and by leveraging the availability of state construction funds, the district has built new instructional buildings and completed major renovation and modernization efforts at both Santiago Canyon College (SCC) and Santa Ana College (SAC).

A community college graduate, Hernandez began his higher education at Pasadena City College and received his bachelor's and master's degrees from California State University at Los Angeles. He received a doctorate in community college administration from Nova Southeastern University in Florida, took graduate courses at the University of California, Los Angeles, and attended the Harvard Graduate School of Education's Institute for the Management of Lifelong Education. Hernandez is a graduate of El Monte High School. Additional details about his awards and honors can be found at www.rsccd.edu.

About Rancho Santiago Community College District

Santa Ana College and Santiago Canyon College are public community colleges of the Rancho Santiago Community College District, which serves the residents of Anaheim Hills, Garden Grove, Irvine, Orange, Santa Ana, Tustin and Villa Park. Both colleges provide education for academic transfer and careers, courses for personal and professional development, and customized training for business and industry.

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