



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Contact: Nick Stavrianoudakis, Director of Public Affairs: (209)575-6959, stavrianoudakisn@yosemite.edu

Joan Smith Selected as YCCD Chancellor

MODESTO, CA – The Yosemite Community College District (YCCD) Board of Trustees unanimously selected Dr. Joan E. Smith to become the YCCD Chancellor at a special meeting held today. Smith previously provided executive leadership to the District as Interim Chancellor (2010-present) and as President of Columbia College (2006-2010).

“My experience with Dr. Smith has led me to realize that she is a person of notable character and immense integrity,” stated YCCD Board Chair Linda Flores. “We (Board members) find her to be an intelligent, ethical and visionary leader. Personally, I know her to be passionate about students’ educational needs and she is dedicated to the mission of community colleges.”

Smith is the seventh YCCD top administrator since MJC and Columbia College merged to form the District in 1968. “I am honored to have been selected YCCD Chancellor. I look forward to leading our institutions during this challenging time. As the largest provider of workforce training in the state, community colleges are still the most cost-effective approach to drive California’s recovery,” said Dr. Smith.

The announcement comes at a time when the YCCD Board is forced to consider layoffs and program consolidations due to proposed state budget cuts. According to projected worst case scenarios, YCCD’s share of cuts could amount to approximately \$13.5 million which is about 11% of 2010-11 budgeted expenditures. Smith shared that “in March, our Board will be planning for the most horrendous cuts the District will have faced in its history.”

According to Smith, “for the past three years our community college budgets have been slashed by the state, forcing us to do more with less. We have maintained enrollment by rescheduling classes, not filling vacancies, and absorbing rising costs of operations. It is now very clear that the current economic downturn and state budget proposal will force us to do less with less. Maintaining the same level of course offerings, programs, staff and student offerings is no longer an option.”

Smith emphasized that “it is important to note that the budget issues YCCD is faced with at this time are a direct result of the State of California and not of the YCCD Board. We have state directives encouraging us to prioritize our offerings to provide basic skills, career/technical education and transfer. Throughout this difficult process, we must have an overarching goal of how we can best serve our students and understand that the Board will have to make difficult decisions regarding cuts based on these state directives.”

“Each segment of the District is likely to be impacted – Modesto Junior College, Columbia College and the Central Services unit. We need to be ready for the ensuing cuts now and work toward transforming our institutions. My goal will be to continue to work with the excellent faculty, managers and staff of the YCCD and hope that the cuts are not worse than we already anticipate. Although we understand that the state is experiencing extreme fiscal issues, I know that California community colleges and the YCCD are the solution to many of the state’s economic woes.”

Board Chair Flores commented on Dr. Smith’s performance as Interim Chancellor stating that “working as Interim Chancellor for the past 6 months, Dr. Smith has demonstrated her abilities to quickly assess the needs of the YCCD and has been able to initiate a plan to move the District forward.”

“The budget projections for the community colleges have been a moving target this year. Much of our projected funding is based on a tax initiative extension that isn’t yet on the ballot. We have no choice but to budget conservatively and conscientiously with our students best interests in mind,” said Dr. Smith.

Smith has been YCCD Interim Chancellor since August 1, 2010 when she replaced Dr. Roe Darnell, who had retired after three years in the position. Prior to being named Interim Chancellor, Smith served as Columbia College’s President for over 3 ½ years. Her accomplishments at YCCD and Columbia College include completing three of the four buildings at Columbia College from Measure E, a successful accreditation visit, establishing a grants office, securing a Title III grant for \$2.5 million and rebuilding the Columbia College Foundation.

Chair Flores added that “while at Columbia College, Dr. Smith developed a true sense of community where all constituents were included.”

Prior to YCCD, she served as Ventura College’s Executive Vice President of Student Learning (2002-2006) and held a variety of positions in the Ventura District, gaining instruction and administrative experiences throughout her career.

The search committee was chaired by Diane Wirth, current YCCD Vice Chancellor of Human Resources. The position had been recruited for extensively and advertised nationally. Initial interviews were completed February 8, 2011, public forums held February 10-11 and interviews with the Board on February 23. Dr. Smith and Dr. Stephen Schoonmaker were the two finalists under consideration by the YCCD Board of Trustees.

The YCCD covers a 4,500 square mile area and serves a population of over 550,000, encompassing all of two counties (Stanislaus and Tuolumne) and parts of 4 others (Calaveras, Merced, San Joaquin, Santa Clara). The District’s two colleges, Modesto Junior College and Columbia College served over 23,000 students in Fall 2010.

Profile and Photo on next page...

Profile:

Dr. Joan E. Smith



Education:

- Ed.D. in Higher Education, Nova Southeastern University, Fort Lauderdale, FL (1988)
- M.S. in Vocational Rehabilitation, University of Wisconsin-Stout, Menomonie, WI (1976)
- B.S. in Psychology, Sociology and Anthropology, University of Wisconsin, Stevens Point, WI (1975)

Professional Experience:

- Interim Chancellor, Yosemite Community College District, Modesto, CA (2010 – present)
- President, Columbia College, Columbia, CA (2006 – 2010)
- Executive Vice President, Student Learning, Ventura College, Ventura, CA (2002 – 2006)
- Dean of Business, Industry, Technology and Off-Campus Programs, Ventura College, Ventura, CA (2000-2002)
- Dean of Institutional and Student Services, Oxnard College, Oxnard, CA (1997-2000)
- Project Director, Workplace Learning Resource Center, Center for International Trade Development and Contract Education, Oxnard College, Oxnard, CA (1993-1997)
- Institutional Researcher, Oxnard College, Oxnard, CA (1991-1992)
- Counselor/Instructor, Educational Assistance Center, Oxnard College, Oxnard, CA (1980-1992)

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