



Press Release

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Modesto Junior College & Columbia College

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Bandyopadhyay named Modesto Junior College President

MODESTO, CA - Dr. Santanu Bandyopadhyay has been selected to become the next president of Modesto Junior College, which marks its centennial anniversary this fall. The Yosemite Community College District Board of Trustees made the selection official at its meeting on Wednesday, May 12, 2021. Bandyopadhyay will assume the role on June 1, 2021.

Bandyopadhyay has served as the Acting and then Interim MJC President since January after former President Jim Houpis resigned. Prior to that, Bandyopadhyay had been the President of YCCD's other institution -- Columbia College in Tuolumne County -- since July 2018.

Together, MJC and Columbia serve more than 25,000 students. About 22,000 of them attend classes at MJC's East and West campuses in Modesto.

"Dr. Bandyopadhyay will be a great fit for Modesto Junior College," said YCCD Chancellor Henry Yong. "He is an extraordinary leader who possesses a strategic vision coupled with a strong background in higher education and research to lead MJC into the future."

Bandyopadhyay takes over at a critical moment for California's 16th-oldest community college. Not only will MJC celebrate its centennial this fall, it also will be focused on reconnecting with its many students after a year of mostly online learning forced by the COVID-19 pandemic. The new president said growing enrollment and forging meaningful alliances with regional employers are among his immediate goals.

"My short-term priority is to re-open the campus -- paying particular attention to equity -- build the enrollments we have lost during the pandemic, develop centers of excellence to cater to the need of our local businesses and ensure long-term fiscal stability," he said. "The effect of the pandemic was most severe on students who need us the most -- therefore, an equity-focused recovery is critical for long-

term economic growth of the region. Developing a deep connection with local businesses and partnering with them to understand and satisfy their needs in innovative ways continues to remain our priority.”

Bandyopadhyay believes one measure of MJC’s impact on the community is how it prepares and trains local students not just to transfer to four-year universities, but also to fill jobs within growing regional industries. An economic analysis of YCCD’s impact estimates it adds \$705.5 million annually to the region and supports nearly 10,000 jobs.

“As California recovers from the pandemic, MJC plays a vital role in developing the workforce for the future,” he said. “We are one of the four colleges across the state that have been selected to partner with Lemelson-MIT Program on Invention, and Inclusive Innovation. The prototype developed by us will be adopted across the state for scaling up such initiatives. This partnership alone has the potential to position MJC as one of the leading institutions in the state.”

Bandyopadhyay has more than 23 years of experience in higher education. He came to Columbia from Cypress College in Orange County, where he spent nearly a decade as first the director of institutional research and planning and then as executive vice president.

Before moving to Southern California, he was the director of institutional research at Zane State College in Ohio and budget and policy analyst at Ohio University. He also spent four years teaching computer science at the National Institute of Information Technology.

“I am thankful for the opportunity to lead MJC in its centennial year,” he said. “During my brief tenure at MJC, I have established connection with our civic leadership, local high schools, businesses and community. I am looking forward to working with all constituencies, both inside and outside the campus, to lead MJC to be the finest institution in the state.”

There were 22 applicants for the MJC opening. A search committee led by Columbia College Interim President G.H. Javaheripour had whittled the original list down to six candidates, who were interviewed. From that group, Bandyopadhyay and two others were recommended as finalists to Yong and the YCCD board. Members of the college and public had a chance to meet and question the finalists at a forum on April 29.

In addition to his college administrative and teaching experience, Bandyopadhyay also has been involved in national initiatives such as Achieving the Dream, Foundations of Excellence and Survey of Entering Student Engagement.

Bandyopadhyay earned a doctorate in higher education from Ohio University, an M.B.A. from Ohio University and a bachelor of science in physics from Kolkata University in India.

With the presidency at MJC filled, YCCD now turns its attention to finding a permanent president at Columbia College. Yong said recruitment will take place in the fall, with the goal of having a new leader selected and hired by November.



Dr. Santanu Bandyopadhyay

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