

News

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Cheryl McKnight of California State University, Dominguez Hills Named California Campus Compact's 2015 Richard E. Cone Award Recipient

California State University, Dominguez Hills' Director of the Center for Service Learning, Internships and Civic Engagement recognized for her impact on service-learning and community-campus partnerships throughout California and the California State University system.

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Hayward, CA – California Campus Compact has selected Cheryl McKnight, Director of the Center for Service Learning, Internships and Civic and Community Engagement (SLICE) at California State University Dominguez Hills (CSUDH) as the recipient of California Campus Compact's 2015 Richard E. Cone Award for Excellence & Leadership in Cultivating Community Partnerships in Higher Education.

California Campus Compact developed the Richard E. Cone Award in response to the recommendations of service-learning practitioners throughout California who expressed hope that creating such an award would inspire all higher education institutions to consider ways to deepen their efforts to institutionalize and sustain authentic community-campus partnerships.

“Ms. McKnight is known for her generous and active dedication and commitment to community engagement and service, and authentic partnerships between community and campus – not just at California State University Dominguez Hills, but throughout the entire California State University system,” said Elaine Ikeda, Ph.D., Executive Director of California Campus Compact, “ We are pleased to recognize Ms. McKnight and highlight her exemplary body of work in the field of service-learning and civic engagement by presenting her with the 2015 Richard E. Cone Award. ”

Since 2007, Ms. McKnight has been a committed leader in the field of service learning and civic engagement. She directed the Center for Service Learning, Internships and Civic and Community Engagement, and founded the American Indian Institute (AII) at CSUDH. According to Dr. Janine Gasco, who nominated Ms. McKnight, under Ms. McKnight's leadership, the campus increased service-learning courses by 300%, increased the number of students enrolled in service-learning course by 285%; the total number of service hours to the community has increased by 379% and the number of community partners has increased by 1000%. She has consistently held a strong vision

of an “engaged institution” and epitomizes sustained engagement by working tirelessly with students, faculty and the different academic disciplines and institutional departments across the university. For example, she secured AmeriCorps grants for their JumpStart program, developed the first Native American Pow Wow on campus since 1982 (which has become an annual campus event), and developed a community program to address childhood obesity, the lack of organized sports and coaching with the Major League Baseball Urban Youth Academy (MLBUYA), the CSUDH department of Kinesiology and the Compton School District.

In addition to her transformational work on campus, Ms. McKnight is also seen as a significant service-learning leader in the California State University system. According to Judy Botelho, Director of the Center for Community Engagement in the California State University, Office of the Chancellor, “Cheryl’s campus, community, and system-wide contributions have resulted in better trained campus service-learning leaders, a strengthened and more forward-thinking CSU network, and better engaged institutions of higher education. These contributions are invaluable and will be felt for years to come and it is why Cheryl is so deserving of this award.”

Ms. Alison Bruesehoff, Executive Director, Dominguez Rancho Adobo Museum wrote, “The commitment to the local community is very strong. Cheryl is constantly bringing people she has met in the community to the museum so they can learn more and continually finds opportunities for partnerships with the museum, the campus and other groups.”

“Her work has affected the lives of thousands of CSUDH students who have expanded their world view through service to others. Her work has also touched the lives of tens of thousands of community members and their families who now see the university not as an ivory tower, but as a part of their lives and a place where they are welcome. Her work has engaged numerous community agencies and organizations who now see partnering with CSUDH not only as an opportunity, but as a necessity to further their mission and goals. There are many more examples of how Ms. McKnight has made all of this a reality. She embodies the true essence of community partnerships and the value that it brings to all involved,” wrote Vice Provost of Student Academic Success, Dr. Mitchell T. Maki.

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About the Richard E. Cone Award for Excellence & Leadership in Cultivating Community Partnerships in Higher Education

Richard E. Cone, Ph.D., has been a voice in the national dialogue on experiential education, civic engagement and service-learning since the 1970s, and has provided a guiding spirit and voice in the development and evolution of California Campus Compact since its beginnings more than 20 years ago. For 25 years, he directed the much-lauded Joint Educational Project (JEP) at the University of Southern California from which he retired in 2002. In 1999, California Campus Compact presented Dick Cone with the first Richard E. Cone Award for Excellence & Leadership in Cultivating Community Partnerships in Higher Education. Since then, the award has been bestowed annually upon an individual who has made significant contributions to the development of partnerships between institutions of higher education and communities – partnerships through which student learning and the quality of life in communities are simultaneously improved. For more information on the Richard E. Cone Award and a list of past honorees, please visit www.cacampuscompact.org/html/initiatives/coneAward.html.

About California Campus Compact

California Campus Compact is a coalition of leading colleges and universities that works to build the collective commitment and capacity of colleges, universities and communities throughout California to advance civic and community engagement

for a healthy, just and democratic society. Through innovative programs and initiatives, grant funding, training and technical assistance, professional development and powerful research studies and publications, California Campus Compact each year invests in and champions more than 500,000 students, faculty members, administrators and community members involved in diverse and ground-breaking activities that support and expand civic and community engagement throughout California. For more information, please visit www.cacampuscompact.org.

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