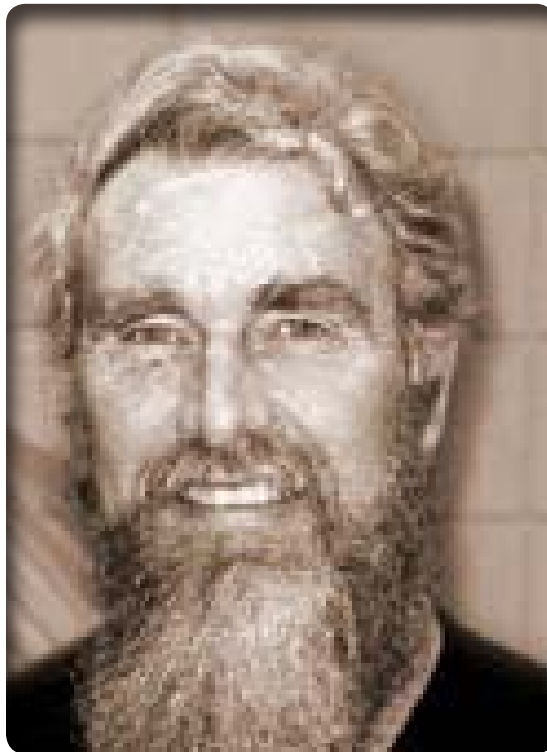




Richard E. Cone Award Recipients Reflect on Impact, Meaning of Honor

Since 1999, California Campus Compact has presented annually the Richard E. Cone Award for Excellence & Leadership in Cultivating Community Partnerships in Higher Education to an individual who has made significant contributions to the development of partnerships between communities and institutions of higher education – partnerships through which student learning and the quality of life in communities are simultaneously improved.



Dr. Richard E. Cone (simply and fondly called “Dick” by his colleagues) has been a voice in the national dialogue on experiential education, civic engagement and service-learning since the 1970s. He 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. While Dick Cone’s focus was always on the benefits for students and communities in bringing communities and campuses in partnership with each other, recognition of his work through JEP informed a larger audience about engaged institutions and pedagogies for learning through service to communities.

California Campus Compact spoke with four past honorees about the impact receiving the Richard E. Cone Award has had on them and their campuses – and the strong need to recognize faculty and staff who dedicate themselves to the development of partnerships between communities and higher education. On the following pages are excerpts from our conversations.



Chris Fiorentino

Director, Jan and Bud Richter Center for
Community Engagement and Service-Learning
California State University, Fresno
Honored in 2000

“To follow in Dick Cone’s footsteps and receive the award the year after he did was incredibly affirming about the work we were doing at California State University, Fresno. The award raised the profile of community engagement on our campus and was a significant stepping stone for us in helping to demonstrate the value of the work.

“There aren’t that many recognitions in our field, and to be recognized by California Campus Compact – a statewide agency – was huge. External recognition is very important in creating awareness of our work and getting support for our efforts. Now that the Cone Award has 10 years of history, it carries even more of an impact.

“I don’t visit many, if any, campuses these days where there is not some sort of community engagement program. Yet, many of my colleagues across the state are still located off in the corner of their campus somewhere. It’s still an upstream battle, and we’re still a little bit on the fringe, still feeling a little bit like the new kid on the block. The Cone Award provides an opportunity to spread the word about the importance of our community engagement work and to help us recruit new followers.”

Kathy O’Byrne

Director, Center for Community Learning
University of California, Los Angeles
Honored in 2004



“The Richard E. Cone Award is important because it emphasizes the partnership. There are lots of awards out there for outstanding faculty member, outstanding community partner, outstanding student – but this award gives you a much broader perspective of the importance of partnership and the reciprocal benefit. It calls attention to the components and best practices of high-quality community-university partnerships.

“It was important to me to receive the Richard E. Cone Award because it acknowledged the work I had done in both the California State University system and the University of California system. My receiving the award after coming to UCLA was very important to our campus because it showed that service-learning could be an integral part of a research university. It showed that faculty and students do care about partnership work. It also highlighted and inspired many people to think about the changing nature of teaching and learning, the future of engaged scholarship, the possibilities that are there when you think about research with public purposes and how you can translate the vision and principles of service-learning into a research context. The recognition received through the Cone Award truly did inspire many more faculty to connect with our Center for Community Learning and explore and adopt the whole way that we work with communities in Los Angeles.”



Tony Mueller

Director, Community Service Learning
University of Redlands
Honored in 2005

“It was an incredible honor to have my name associated with Dick Cone’s. Beyond that, the press that the award received on our campus and in our community created awareness about our service-learning program and helped the program receive funding from donors who would not ordinarily have funded us. We garnered a great deal of recognition and financial support so that we could increase our capacity and ability to do more service work.

“For me, for my staff, for our campus, the Cone Award meant that for the last two decades that we had been doing service-learning – all of the principles that we live by and guide our office by were honored. When I accepted the award, I accepted it on behalf of everyone who I have worked with. A lot of what I was given credit for came from the good works of my staff. The Cone Award was a celebration of all of our efforts.

“If there is someone on your campus who is spearheading and nurturing community partnerships, take the time to nominate them. It is essential to recognize professionals who dedicate their lives to service in higher education, particularly in these challenging economic times. It means the world not only to them, but also to the institution. Receiving the award is quite an extraordinary experience – but so is receiving a nomination.”



Carol Wilkinson

Service-Learning Coordinator, Department of Student Services
MiraCosta College
Honored in 2007

“I was so honored to receive the Cone Award. It was particularly meaningful for me because I was the first recipient from a community college. I felt proud knowing that our work was recognized and equally valued. I hope that I am the first of many community college leaders to receive this recognition.

“The award validated the service-learning work that occurs at MiraCosta. It brought a lot of attention to our program. People began talking about service-learning and what an asset the program is to the campus and community. It’s been two years and people still talk about the award. There is a sense of pride in knowing that our campus is dedicated to developing meaningful campus-community partnerships.

“I was delighted to celebrate the award with my colleagues in the region. In our field, we really do celebrate one another’s contributions. As one colleague told me, ‘Just bask in it.’ It was quite humbling because I have such respect for people in this field and the amazing work they do.”