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## Ostash and Hamilton Recipients of Excellence Award

Friday, May 6, 2016

Two Cerro Coso employees received national recognition for their leadership and contributions to higher education.

Vice President of Student Services Heather Ostash and Counselor Karee Hamilton were presented the 2015 John and Suanne Roueche Excellence Award at a conference in Chicago, IL, in March that drew community college representatives from across the nation. The award is from the League for Innovation in the Community College, an international consortium of community colleges and their districts, and 160 corporate partners.



Ostash was recognized for her leadership role within the college and district focusing on innovative ways to improve services to students. She served as the key administrative lead in Achieving the Dream (ATD) that resulted in the implementation of the Student Equity Plan mandated by the state. ATD also led the change in college culture to data-driven decision making, and assisted Cerro Coso in developing strategies to close identified gaps in student success and completion. Ostash's efforts resulted in Cerro Coso becoming a pilot college working with the Education Advisory Board to analyze and modify the onboarding processes streamlining the route students take to matriculate into college through the use of technology. Ostash also championed the smartphone application GradGuru that provides just-in-time messaging to students to keep them on track throughout the semester.

With her heart and focus on supporting student access and achievement, Counselor Karee Hamilton was recognized for her direct involvement and leadership in a number of efforts in utilizing technology to better serve students including: online orientation, educational planning in DegreeWorks, developing program pathways, developing workshops to be offered online, and the highly effective use of Moodle for online instruction. Hamilton also plays a key role in many of the outreach activities facilitated through counseling, including: Career Day, I'm Going to College, and the Student Ambassador Program.

"Heather and Karee deserve this recognition for their quality leadership practices and outstanding contributions to student learning," said Cerro Coso President Jill Board.

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## Pang and Witt Recipients of CCCC Excellence Award

Monday, May 1, 2017

Two CCCC employees received recognition for their leadership and contributions to higher education.

Director of Distance Education Rebecca Pang and Educational Media Design Specialist Justin Witt were presented the 2017 Cerro Coso Community College Excellence in Education Award for their leadership over the last three years in dramatically increasing the effectiveness of the Distance Education Office and improving the college online learning environment.



Witt's ability to write client-side scripts allowed the college to standardize the theme from online courses, effectively branding CCCC online courses in Canvas and Moodle. His efforts created an important consistent look and feel to classes so students do not have to adjust and readjust with each new online class. His messaging scripts allow the college to directly communicate important technical messages to students and faculty inside of an online course. As a result of his scripting capability, the college has seen improvement in its online attrition and retention rates. Witt's expertise in this crucial area has been a huge asset in promoting the Distance Education department's goals for creating a streamlined, consistent, and professional environment for CC Online.

Pang has led CC Online into a strongly supportive, focused, and directed environment. Her accomplishments include: leading major changes, including a Moodle version upgrade, standardized theme implementation, Moodle orientation, and the transition to Canvas. She is directly responsible for streamlining department optional workflow to minimize faculty and student complaints and frustration about poor department services, reducing duplication of services, and eliminating unnecessary processes. In support of faculty in online courses, Pang created short how-to videos on Moodle and Canvas functionalities.

The results of the two's efforts is impressive, most notably a 4% success rate increase in distance education classes from 2013-2014 to 2014-2015. Pang has achieved these results because her management style is rooted in the kind of collaboration that fosters a spirit of positivity, lessens resistance to ideas, lets the right ideas rise to the top (if well managed), and draws from a wide variety of experiences, backgrounds, and perspectives.

"Rebecca and Justin deserve this recognition for their quality leadership practices and outstanding contributions to student learning," said Cerro Coso President Jill Board.

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## Four Recipients of CCCC Excellence Award

Tuesday, March 6, 2018

Four classified staff members received recognition for their leadership and contributions in developing and implementing a Classified Mentor Program at the college. Julianne Maikai (Alternative Media Specialist), Ashlin Mattos (Job Development Specialist), Nikki Gardepe (Assessment Assistant), and Paul Kuttig (System Support Specialist II) were acknowledged for their leadership in developing a mentor program. The program provides trained mentors who serve as guides, facilitators, role models, and allies for new classified staff to help them successfully integrate into their new positions and the college culture. The Classified Mentor Program has an oversight committee that meets formally once a semester to review new mentor applications, arrange training and orientations for both mentors and mentees, troubleshoot problems, and discuss ideas for improvement based on the results of exit surveys conducted at the end of the program. In effect since spring 2017, the program has been institutionalized and integrated into the Human Resources on-boarding processes. The results of this work has been increased understanding and knowledge of the classified role in participatory governance, CSEA, as well as new employees having someone to ask questions of when they arise. Excellence is the gradual result of always striving to do better.



Picture caption: Classified staff members (left to right) Paul Kuttig (System Support Specialist II), Julianne Maikai (Alternative Media Specialist), Nikki Gardepe (Assessment Assistant), and Ashlin Mattos (Job Development Specialist).

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