



California Community Colleges

PRESS RELEASE

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Community College Districts Throughout California Celebrated for Sustainability Efforts

SACRAMENTO, Calif. — The Contra Costa, Citrus and Hartnell community college districts have been honored with the California Community Colleges Board of Governors Energy and Sustainability Award for projects that are drastically reducing their districts' carbon footprint and saving taxpayer dollars through lower utility bills.

In addition, the Los Angeles Community College District was honored with the Faculty/Student Initiative Award for its Virtual Climate Crisis curriculum and Peter Hardash of the Rancho Santiago Community College District was recognized with a Sustainability Champion Award for his groundbreaking work during a career spanning nearly three decades.

The Board of Governors' annual Energy and Sustainability Awards were established in 2012 to recognize and promote the ongoing efforts of community colleges to achieve environmental sustainability.

“California’s community colleges have long been leaders in putting into practice the lessons and skills they teach their students, and matters relating to sustainability are no exception,” said Board of Governors President Pamela Haynes. “On behalf of the Board of Governors, I want to thank this year’s recipients for their dedication and exemplary efforts.”

The 2020 awards were announced at the Board of Governors January 19 meeting in the following categories:

- Excellence in Energy and Sustainability – Innovative Project, which recognizes the use and implementation of innovative technologies and progressive practices.
- Excellence in Energy and Sustainability – Faculty/Student Initiatives, which recognizes faculty and students who have excelled in developing sustainability initiatives for their college.

- Excellence in Energy and Sustainability – Sustainability Champion, which recognizes an individual who has demonstrated exceptional leadership and achievement in energy efficiency and sustainability efforts.

Best Overall Innovative Project – Large District

The Contra Costa Community College District was honored for a new science building at Contra Costa College, a three-story, state-of-the-art structure that is the first in the district designed to be a Zero Net Energy structure. Much of the savings comes from how spaces in the building are positioned; energy-intensive spaces are on the north side of the structure and lower energy-demanding spaces are on the south side. Sustainable design strategies will be highlighted in an infographic prominently displayed in the main lobby to serve as a learning tool. The building is projected to save 93 kilowatts, 81,000 kilowatt hours and 25,800 therms, resulting in a 34 percent reduction in utility costs and 27 percent savings in energy use.

Best Overall Innovative Project – Medium District

The Citrus Community College District was honored for improving the efficiency of 12 buildings and central plant at Citrus College through a comprehensive initiative involving the college, Southern California Edison and kW Engineering. The retro-commissioning project meant automating controls for a thermal energy storage system – which is minimizing peak demand charges and saving on maintenance time. The effort is yielding an annual energy savings of nearly 1.5 million kilowatt hours and 40,000 therms, resulting in an ongoing energy bill savings of approximately \$225,000 annually.

Best Overall Innovative Project – Small District

Hartnell College is being honored for the design and installation of 2.6 megawatts of solar photovoltaic generating capacity at the Alisal and Main campuses. Upgrades also were made to the lighting, HVAC and energy management systems to make facilities run as efficiently as possible. Hartnell College, which integrated the solar energy project into existing career training programs and STEM curriculum, is projected to realize \$26 million in savings through renewable energy production and efficient energy management over the life of the project. The projected 4.7 million reduction in kilowatt hours of energy use offsets more than 3,300 metric tons of carbon dioxide – equivalent to removing 714 cars from the road each year.

Excellence in Energy and Sustainability – Faculty/Student Initiative Award:

Los Angeles Community College District

The Los Angeles Community College District was honored for its Virtual Climate Crisis curriculum, which focuses on promoting climate-conscious behavior and thinking using virtual materials to engage students who are learning at home. Materials include a “Save Energy While Schooling at Home” video about the financial and environmental benefits of saving energy at home and tips on how to do so; and the Climate Action & Justice Speaker Series hosted on Zoom for students to learn from different local organizations about the climate action and justice movement and options to get involved.

Excellence in Energy and Sustainability – Sustainability Champion:

Peter Hardash, Rancho Santiago Community College District

Peter Hardash, former Vice Chancellor of Business Operations of Rancho Santiago Community College District, was honored for devoting 28 years as a leader both at the local and state levels, mentoring numerous peers and serving in critical roles on statewide committees. Some of his accomplishments include: the adoption of a District Sustainability Plan; completion of the Proposition 39 Energy Efficiency program projects, which included \$4.7 Million in projects along

with \$600,000 in Incentives; completion of a new central plant at Santa Ana College with thermal ice storage tanks, along with the replacement of 100-year-old underground utilities, combining for a total of more than \$52 million in improvements; creation of a long-term funding source allowing the district to plan and implement future projects in alignment with the Sustainability Plan.

The California Community Colleges is the largest system of higher education in the nation, composed of 73 districts and 115 colleges serving 2.1 million students per year. California community colleges provide career education and workforce training; guaranteed transfer to four-year universities; degree and certificate pathways; and basic skills education in English and math. As the state's engine for social and economic mobility, the California Community Colleges supports the [Vision for Success](#), a strategic plan designed to improve student success outcomes, increase transfer rates and eliminate achievement gaps. For more information, please visit the [California Community Colleges website](#) or follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

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