



**PRESS RELEASE**

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**California Community Colleges Hosts Veterans Summit in San Jose**

*SAN JOSE, Calif.* – Nearly 300 California Community Colleges faculty, staff, and administrators and other professionals who work with student veterans are meeting today in San Jose to attend a summit to share information and best practices to help colleges develop or expand services for these students and learn how to better understand and address their needs.

“This is a great opportunity for higher education professionals to connect with their colleagues across the state and exchange experiences from their work with student veterans,” said California Community Colleges Chancellor Brice W. Harris. “We are committed to seeing all of our students succeed, but student veterans often face unique roadblocks in achieving their goals. The veterans summits are one of the ways we have been able to help community colleges develop the expertise to serve them well.”

Dr. Manuel Baca, immediate past president of the California Community Colleges Board of Governors who is also a trustee for the Mt. San Antonio Community College District, a faculty member at Rio Hondo College, and a Vietnam veteran will address the summit participants on Friday morning.

The board recognized the need to help colleges ramp up their veterans’ services programs when the number of veterans coming home from Iraq and Afghanistan began growing rapidly almost five years ago. As a result of the board’s focus on veterans, the number of community colleges with dedicated veterans centers on campus has increased from 15 to 62.

The summit began this morning at the San Jose Marriot Hotel and ends tomorrow afternoon. The event kicked off with a presentation from the San Jose State University Color Guard and a welcome introduction by Harris.

The Thursday keynote speech will be delivered at 1 p.m. by Jon Warren, a veteran of Operation Iraqi Freedom. Warren now works with veterans seeking care at the Brain Treatment Center in Newport Beach, Calif., an outpatient clinic that specializes in treating neurological disorders, such as post-traumatic stress disorder. The Friday keynote will be delivered at 1 p.m. by Dr. David Joseph, director of the Oakland Veterans Center and a clinical psychologist specializing in treating veterans’ issues.

California State University and University of California veteran services coordinators are also attending the event.

The summit features panel discussions on student veterans’ issues with subject-matter experts. Some of the topics to be discussed include: creating campus veterans resource centers, housing for student veterans, mentorship programs, and granting college credit for military service.

This is the fourth summit dealing with student veterans’ issues hosted by the California Community Colleges. The first

occurred in San Diego in 2011, followed by one in Redwood City, Calif. in 2012, and another in 2013 in Newport Beach, Calif.

The summits have grown over the years. The first lasted one day with 200 people in attendance and seven panel discussions. This year's summit features 20 panel discussions. University of California and California State University veteran services coordinators began attending last year.

The California Community Colleges serves between 60,000 and 70,000 veterans and active duty military members annually.

The summit is jointly sponsored by the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office, the Faculty Association of California Community Colleges, and the Foundation for California Community Colleges. It is supported by donations from the Land of the Free Foundation and Kognito Interactive. For a schedule of events, visit:

<http://www.veteranssummit.org/agenda.html>.

The California Community Colleges has a proud tradition of working with student veterans to help them achieve their academic and career goals. In November, Harris presented the Chancellor's Student Success Award to American River College's Veterans Resource Center for providing veterans with supportive services that have helped them excel in school and obtain good-paying jobs.

*The California Community Colleges is the largest system of higher education in the nation composed of 72 districts and 112 colleges serving 2.1 million students per year. Community colleges supply workforce training, basic skills education and prepare students for transfer to four-year institutions. The Chancellor's Office provides leadership, advocacy and support under the direction of the Board of Governors of the California Community Colleges. For more information about the community colleges, please visit*

<http://californiacommunitycolleges.cccco.edu/>.

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