



CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGES

CHANCELLOR'S OFFICE

PRESS RELEASE

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California Community Colleges Board of Governors Honors Four with 2017 Classified Employee of the Year Award

Annual award highlights dedication and hard work of thousands of college support staff

SACRAMENTO, Calif. – The California Community Colleges Board of Governors today honored Ashley Chelonis, Zolayma Martin, Roberta McKinney and Julie Vu as the 2017 California Community Colleges Classified Employees of the Year.

“It is an honor to recognize and celebrate these outstanding partners whose work is shaping the educational experience for our students and helping to build a climate that fosters success,” said California Community Colleges Board of Governors President [Cecilia V. Estolano](#). “They work extraordinarily hard each day to support our students, and on behalf of the system we thank them for their outstanding contributions.”

Established in 2008, and first handed out in 2009, the award is presented annually to community college classified employees who demonstrate the highest level of commitment to professionalism and the community colleges. Recipients are nominated by members of their college or district community and endorsed by their local board of trustees. Representatives of the California Community Colleges Board of Governors, the California Community Colleges Chancellor’s Office and the Foundation for California Community Colleges select the award recipients. The winners must have a record of outstanding performance on the job, as well as a record of active participation on campus and in their respective communities.

The Classified Employee of the Year Award is supported through a grant from the Foundation for California Community Colleges. Each recipient will receive a \$500 cash award and a commemorative plaque.

The 2017 Award Winners:

Ashley Chelonis, Oxnard College

Ashley Chelonis is Oxnard College’s sole instructional technologist/designer and has served the district for six years.

Ashley is instrumental in instructing and supporting faculty, staff and students in the use of technologies to support student learning and student success. She is dedicated to improving distance education as a pathway to student learning. Ashley provides online teaching workshops to ensure instructor readiness for online instruction. She is also a leader on the district-wide Instructional Technology Advisory Committee as the senior instructional technology/designer in the district and collaborates with committee members to identify, develop, implement and evaluate areas in which technology can be applied to enhance teaching and learning. Through this committee, Ashley has fostered collaboration and created a culture of mutual support among her colleagues at other campuses in the district. Outside of her duties at Oxnard College, Ashley is active in her community, serves on the Executive board of the Simi Valley Neighborhood Council and is an advocate for foster youth. A licensed foster parent, Ashley volunteers as a youth leader and mentor to youths ranging in age from junior high through college. Ashley and her family also rescue and foster cats and dogs throughout their community.

Zolayma Martin, Contra Costa College

Zolayma Martin is a Liberal Arts Division secretary and has served the district for 15 years. Zolayma is an exceptional staff member who represents all of the values included in the district and college mission. She is committed to extremely high professional standards. She is welcoming, calm, kind, knowledgeable and helpful to students, staff and faculty members. Zolayma is an expert at all facets of her job, particularly those aspects related to budgeting and accounting procedures. Moreover, she is the “go to” admin at the college. She provides training to not only other administrative secretaries, but also to full-time and adjunct faculty. Having obtained an accounting degree, one of her many strengths is a clear understanding of load calculations, budget items and expense claims. In addition to her obligations at work, Zolayma volunteers her time at her children’s elementary, middle and high schools, committing countless hours as the apparent leader across several campuses. She is also very dedicated to her church and volunteers there whenever possible.

Roberta McKinney, Sierra College

Roberta McKinney is a confidential executive secretary and has served the district for 37 years. In her long career at Sierra College, which began less than a year after her graduation from Sierra College with an AA degree, Roberta has consistently demonstrated an unfailingly optimistic, cheerful, “can-do” helpfulness and caring to all with whom she works. From students to the college’s president and trustees, to faculty, deans, IT techs, custodians, temporary workers-regardless of who they are, or what they do, she is positive, empathetic, helpful, always kind, often ingenious in solving problems, or calming frayed nerves, typically good humored and simply unforgettable to most who make her acquaintance. Roberta has a thorough understanding of the workings of Sierra College and of the California Community Colleges and is of the rare combination of high professionalism and approachability to all she encounters.

Roberta has earned the college's highest classified employee recognition as the 1996 Classified Staff Member of the Year award, and in 2009, she received a written commendation for her service to the college "above and beyond the call of duty." In both 2013 and 2014, the ACCJC site visit team chairwoman singled her out for exemplary work assisting their site team visit. Roberta serves her community by volunteering with the Sierra College Patrons, whose focus is on raising money for student scholarships, as well as with the Placer Land Trust, which works to support the preservation of green space in Placer County.

Julie Vu, Mission College

Julie Vu is the Welcome Center program coordinator and has served the district for 17 years. As the coordinator of the Welcome Ambassadors, Julie, proactively works with each student, mentoring them not only about their job roles, but also in important career and communication skills. Many students have grown under her support, changing from shy, quiet individuals to vocal, active team members. With a "student-first" philosophy, Julie provides exceptional leadership in her position at the Welcome Center, where thousands of students, prospective students and families visit daily. She takes the time to give personalized attention to everyone with whom she interacts. While sensitive to diverse communities of students, Julie is keenly aware of the importance of strategic data-driven analysis in assessing program needs to ensure that services address the needs of internal and external constituents. She is collaborative with all units of the college and strives to make sure students reach their goals and have opportunities at the highest level, while modeling this leadership and service for staff and faculty. Julie's leadership outside of Mission College is evident through her work as a volunteer anchor with Net TV, a local Vietnamese television station located in San Jose. Julie has co-anchored numerous segments as a community role model in discussing the importance of education and providing guidance on how to access information and resources within community colleges. In addition, as an active member in her church, Julie participates in fundraisers and sings in her church choir.

The California Community Colleges is the largest system of higher education in the nation composed of 72 districts and 113 colleges serving 2.1 million students per year. Community colleges supply workforce training, basic skills education in English and math, 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/>, <https://www.facebook.com/CACommColleges>, or <https://twitter.com/CalCommColleges>.

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