

The District Connection

Riverside Community College District

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Chancellor's Corner



As the Riverside Community College District evolves into a multi-college system, we risk losing the ties ... the connections, if you will ... that have brought the institution through nearly ten decades as one of California's leading community colleges. Growth and change pose many challenges and threaten old connections, but they also hold the potential for great progress and innovation.

Steve Jobs, CEO of what arguably is one of the most forward-thinking technology companies in the world, once said, "Innovation is usually the result of connections of past experiences. But if you have the same experiences as everyone else, you are unlikely to look in a different direction."

Riverside Community College with its rich tradition has a great many shared experiences upon which to build, and many new experiences are in store as the campuses become colleges. Some of these experiences will originate on individual campuses and in individual departments and offices. Others will emerge from college-to-college partnerships, joint programs with other educational systems, and district-community initiatives. During the coming years of growth and change, it will be important that we stay connected with each other and that we continue to share a vision of our common purpose as an institution of, by and for the communities we serve.

This new publication, *District Connection*, is a step in that direction. It seeks to inform employees about employment-related news and events, give individuals tools to achieve success on the job, and encourage all of us to work together to better serve our students.

As you read this inaugural issue of *District Connection*, I hope you will find that the information applies to your daily life as an RCCD employee. No doubt the publication will change as the District and soon-to-be colleges change. I invite you to send in suggestions for articles, as well as feedback regarding editorial content. We want this publication to be factual, timely, relevant and, most importantly, YOURS. If we can accomplish these goals, we will have built lasting connections on many levels within our College District. We will be in sync with each other, and there will be no stopping us in our important work.

Jim Buysse
Interim Chancellor

District NEWS and EVENTS

Health Benefits Fair

The Diversity & Human Resources Department (DHR) conducted its first annual benefits fair on Thursday, August 30, on the Aguilar Patio of the Riverside Campus. In spite of the record high temperatures, the turnout was outstanding. RCCD employees had an opportunity to pick up great information and giveaways and meet our vendors who contributed some nice door prizes. We are actively working on providing healthy information to our workforce and this was a stride in that direction. This was a first for RCCD and next year we plan to host Benefit Fairs on each campus.



2007 CSEW Week – A Success!

The week of May 21 was Classified School Employees Week and the RCCD acknowledged its stellar group of classified and confidential employees.

Kudos to the planning committee for their efforts in making the week successful – Cynthia Acosta, Art Alcaraz, Chani Beeman, Tamara Caponetto, Chris Carlson, Tish Chavez, Debra Creswell, Rosa Espinoza-Leal, Jonell Guzman, Cristina Leon, Gloria Lopez, Lee Lover, Jillian Oliveras, Bill Orr, Tony Ortiz, Carmen Payne, Ricardo Perez, Gustavo Segura, Bill Vincent, and Cookie Villanueva.



RCCD and Jurupa Unified School District Partnership Brings College Classes to Rubidoux



The Riverside Community College District (RCCD) in partnership with the Jurupa Unified School District launched an Early College High School in September, 2006. The school at the RCCD Rubidoux Annex on Opal Street has been well received by the community and hopes to reap dividends for the students, the community, and the RCCD.

The Early College High School (ECHS) is composed of smaller learning communities, built around academic areas and

occupational fields, each of which leads to a college education and career preparation. The planned Academies have a goal of ultimately attracting 150 to 300 high school students from the Jurupa service area. Offering a college preparatory curriculum and an academically rigorous career and technical education program are part of an effort to increase the college-going rates, improve retention, and help students build a career focus.

The ECHS/Jurupa Early College Academies are supported by a grant from The James Irvine Foundation. Recently, RCCD faculty and JUSD instructors attended the Early College Teaching Seminar sponsored by the Gates Foundation. The RCCD/JUSD team will be incorporating strategies, such as Writing and Thinking workshops into all ECHS classes.

As part of the effort to increase college attendance and serve the community, RCCD also is offering college classes at the Rubidoux Annex. Initial course offerings included: Business, CIS, Early Childhood Studies, English, Guidance, Health

Science, History, Math, Medical Terminology, and Psychology. Short-term courses have also been scheduled. It is anticipated that the offerings will expand in future terms.

Early feedback indicates that Rubidoux and the surrounding communities are excited about these new initiatives and the new opportunities and options available for high school students and the community as a whole. For more information, contact Claudia Castro, 222-8167.



District HEARTBEAT



A healthy heart is within everyone's reach. We all know some of the rules: Eat less fat, eat more fruits and vegetables, and keep blood pressure and blood cholesterol levels in check. And there are more ways to boost heart health:

Don't skip breakfast. Most heart attacks occur between 7 a.m. and noon. Eating breakfast appears to make platelet cells less sticky and less likely to clump together and block a vital artery.

Lighten up. People who overreact to stressful situations are more likely to have heart trouble.

Antioxidants – Vitamins A, C, E, and beta-carotene appear to slow plaque formation in the arteries.

Don't smoke. Smoking affects more than your lungs. Nonsmokers cut their risk of heart attack.

Get off the couch. Sedentary living is one of the greatest risk factors in heart attack deaths. Just one-half hour of moderate physical activity most days of the week can deliver fitness benefits similar to traditional exercise routines. So walk briskly. Take the stairs. Play actively with kids. Live longer! (Top Health Newsletter)

tips

Customer Service Tips

1. Listen, listen, listen
2. Value a handshake
3. Be a subject matter expert
4. Everyone smiles in the same language
5. Help customers feel welcome, understood, important, and comfortable

PERSONALLY SPEAKING...

Diversity and Human Resources Committed to Communication

We believe the merger of the Office of Diversity, Equity and Compliance with the Human Resources Department creates more efficiency as we team to serve our customers.

The new Diversity and Human Resources Department balances service and regulatory requirements with responsibilities in critical areas including recruitment and selection, handling discrimination complaints, sexual harassment complaints, classification grading, grievance and disciplinary matters, training, employment services, and evaluation processing among numerous others.

Our goal is to help the Riverside Community College District provide a safe and discriminatory free work environment for all – staff, prospective employees, and the community we serve. We are committed to providing quality service to our internal customers in order that they can fulfill their goals and objectives to the Board of Trustees and the students we serve.

We strive to assure employees an objective and responsive Diversity and Human Resources Department. To the community we strive to assure an environment that is fair, open, legally compliant, and customer friendly.

In the interest of creating a meaningful tool for communicating with staff, we have partnered with the Public Affairs Department to create this newsletter. *Connection* is intended to provide valuable information to you.

We expect to prepare the newsletter to be delivered every other month commencing with this inaugural issue. Please feel free to provide us with your feedback. We want to deliver a communication tool that you will find helpful.

Circle of Knowledge

Customer Service – Who are the District's most important customers? While all of our customers are important, one tops the list: students. Some of us may never come in contact with students. Others see students frequently as part of daily campus duties, often before the students ever set foot in a classroom. Regardless of the amount of interaction each of us has with students, they are the main reason all of us are here. Our job is to meet their needs, and those of other RCCD customers—the public, co-workers, alumni, and supporters.

Customers come in all sizes, shapes, colors and attitudes. Some are bold, cocky and smart. Some are scared, nervous and shy. Some are outspoken while some need us to pry information from them. Some customers bring language challenges and some bring learning challenges to the table. Some are young and naïve and some have lived tough lives on the street. Some are the consummate customer who is friendly,

polite and gets their business done efficiently. Some make serving them very difficult at times. It's easy to lose excitement, passion and enthusiasm for the job when you have to deal with angry customers, demanding students or uncooperative co-workers. However, it is our duty to work cooperatively through challenges and attempt to show our "best face" at all times.

Customer service requires that each District employee render service in the most proficient manner possible on a consistent basis to all of our customers, internal and external. Customer satisfaction is paramount. We want to turn our customers into advocates who are aggressively loyal to us and actively praise their experiences with us to others. Advocates are our largest unpaid sales force and help share in the development of our image.

Whatever level our position is within the organization, the principles of customer service are important for all

and we should constantly strive to exceed our customers' expectations and demonstrate that RCCD is a genuinely customer friendly organization. Our enthusiasm and commitment in representing the District to the students and varied customers we serve is critical to our success.

Thank you for your contribution to the Riverside Community College District. Our workforce is truly customer focused.





Updates from Diversity and Human Resources

Online applicant tracking system - We are actively in the process of developing an online application system to be used for all RCCD vacancies. This automated system will help us improve our services to managers and supervisors, search committee members, and the applicant pool in general. Our new automated system will include the ability for applicants to complete and submit their application forms online. We will have terminals available in the Diversity and Human Resources Department for those candidates who might need them.

Requisitions to fill vacancies will also be completed online thus cutting several days off the flow of a recruitment request form (pink) from initiator of the request through all of the various sign offs required, to Budget and then, ultimately, to the Diversity and Human Resources Department.

Search committee members will be able to screen applications from their office computers. Design features also enable us the opportunity to download specific requirements into the system for each recruitment effort which will enable us to assess whether applicants meet our minimum requirements. We will also be able to do preliminary screening of applicants via the system thus saving staff time in reviewing only the most competitively qualified applicants. A team comprised of DHR staff and IS staff is diligently working on development of the system. Stay tuned for more details as we build our system. Target date for implementation is October of this year.

Summer Schedule – The 4/10 summer schedule concluded on Friday, August 17. We are pleased that this could be offered to staff to provide important work/life balance for them. Regular schedules resumed on August 20.



The District Connection is published bimonthly by the Diversity and Human Resources and Public Affairs departments of Riverside Community College District

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Points of View

DHR's Roving Reporters, Yami Chavez, Ann Tewahaftewa and Hetal Patel, asked RCCD staff about customer service. Following are responses from some of your fellow District team members, sharing their points of view.

What does "exceptional customer service" mean to you?

Brian Bautigan, Alternate Media Specialist, Riverside Campus: The customer—the student, community member or colleague—receives my full attention. Whether the project is big or small doesn't matter. What does matter is that it's done in a timely manner and with an effort to satisfy the needs of everyone involved.

Vivian Gonzales, IDS, Health, Human and Public Services, Moreno Valley Campus: One stop for students, staff and faculty to have their questions answered or referred to the proper department for immediate satisfaction.

Mark DeAsis, Student Services Supervisor, Norco Campus: Continually recognizing the needs of the general public while implementing services to meet those needs and demands. I believe in consistently exceeding the customer's expectations for a productive and efficient department.

Daniela Grecu, Outreach Specialist, Norco Campus: Going beyond mere politeness and more into constructive relationship building. It is important to go the extra mile to ensure that everyone we come into contact with leaves with a positive impression. If I am a reflection of the College, it is important to me that the first, second or third impression I leave with someone is consistent and representative of the quality institution that we are.

Dale Barajas, Director, Plant Operations and Maintenance, Moreno Valley Campus: I appreciate it when someone is courteous and has the answers I need.

Peggie Negrete, IDS, Guidance/Counseling, Moreno Valley Campus: Exceptional customer service is meeting the needs and expectations of the customer as defined by the customer. Nothing impresses a customer more than an employee who goes above and beyond the call of duty to ensure total customer satisfaction.

Sabina Fernandez, IDS, Moreno Valley Campus: Being a good listener, courteous, friendly, and trying my best to assist the customer in every possible way.

Sandra Goulsby, Assistant Director, Admissions & Records, Riverside Campus: Valuing the customer enough to go the extra mile to ensure that their wants and needs are met. The customer may not get the desired result, but will have few complaints about the experience.

The second question asked by our Roving Reporters - How do you provide excellent customer service in your job?

Brian: I consider everyone I come in contact with to be my customer. Whether I'm providing a service, materials, or information; whether it's for a student, faculty, or staff member, I do my best to be friendly and knowledgeable so that people know I'm someone they can come back to again and again when they need assistance. And, since I've gotten to know a lot of people during my time here at RCCD, if I can't provide the answer, I usually know who can, so I'll make sure the person is put in contact with the person or department that can help.

Sandra: Listen, listen, listen; identify the customer's wants and expectations. Refrain from being judgmental; empathize with the customer if necessary; provide service with a smile.

Sabina: Be courteous, have a positive attitude and attempt to answer all questions the best I can. If I do not have an answer, I will find someone who does.

Peggie: I listen, research, and deliver a final product within my scope. At the end of the day I feel a sense of accomplishment that I did all I could to assist in delivering a final product.

Vivian: By being well trained and informed in all aspects of the disciplines within our departments. Provide students, staff, and administrators with information to satisfy their needs.

Dale: By getting requests done within a reasonable timeframe and by having a positive attitude even when the customer is not so kind.

Mark: As we move toward a three-college system, I am working diligently to increase on-site services and functions that were previously only offered at the Riverside Campus. Students who choose to have Norco as their home campus should be able to complete Admissions and Records transactions locally.

Daniela: Many times I am the first point of contact for prospective students in our local community. Perception is reality! Providing excellent customer service means meeting and exceeding the expectations of my job. Ultimately, it is important that I am friendly, knowledgeable, responsive, engaged, and most importantly, always actively listening!

Thanks to our employees who contributed their sentiments about what good customer service means to them.

We are all customer service specialists in our own way. Thank you for what you do for RCCD and for making customer service a priority.