

Seattle College District receives 2014 Charles Kennedy Equity Award

SEATTLE—The Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT) has announced that the Seattle College District is the recipient of its 2014 Charles Kennedy Equity Award. The award recognizes institutions that demonstrate evidence of leadership in setting policies, championing an environment of inclusivity, and ensuring results for the success, enhancement and expansion of opportunities for women and underrepresented and underserved communities.

“This award is more than a recognition of our programs,” says Seattle Colleges Chancellor Jill Wakefield. “It certifies that we are on the right track. That said, there’s more that needs to be done to ensure these fast-growing populations have an opportunity to be successful.

“Thanks go to our trustees—who lead us in our commitment to diversity and equity—and our faculty and staff who work every day to instruct, train, and mentor these groups.”

Diversity flourishes throughout the Seattle Colleges: half of the students are ethnically diverse and their backgrounds represent more than 80 first languages. The student body is 17.6 percent Asian/Pacific Islander; 16.7 percent African American; 14 percent Other/Multiple; 2.9 percent Hispanic; and .8 percent Native American. In addition, the District sends more transfer students of color than any other community college in the state to the University of Washington, where, in GPA and graduation rates, they do as well as or better than those who start at the UW as freshmen.

Some of the college programs targeting diverse student populations include:

- The **Pathway to Completion** initiative increases the number of students who complete the pre-college math sequence within one year.
- The **13th Year Scholarship Program** provides a one-year, full tuition scholarship to any graduate of partner high schools who participates in required college-readiness activities and enrolls at South Seattle College the following fall.
- The **Northstar Navigator Program** provides tutoring to increase retention and completion rates of the diverse student populations.
- The **Women’s Center** offers direct support, resources, and referrals to students of all gender identities and sexual orientations.
- **Emerging Leaders of Communities of Color Committee** meets to collectively improve educational, economic, social and environmental opportunities for communities and organizations in the colleges’ service area.

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- **V.O.I.C.E.S** (Vision, Opportunity, Inclusion, Collaboration, Equity, Social Justice) is a campuswide learning community for diverse leaders. It builds knowledge and leadership skills to support student success, especially those of marginalized communities. It promotes diversity through equity and social justice frameworks across the curriculum and in department meetings through professional development trainings.
- **Diversity Speaker Series** plans and implements programs and activities that promote student engagement, build community, reflect values of diversity and foster a rich intellectual, educational and cultural campus life.
- **Students of Color Conference** brings together students from higher education institutions from across Washington state. It provides opportunities for students to develop leadership skills and strategies to empower themselves personally, culturally and academically.

Chancellor Wakefield says, “It demonstrates our colleges’ commitment to help every student who comes through our doors to complete their program of study and meet their goals. We know that completing higher education is the pathway to a livable wage and quality of life. Our board is committed to ending inequity in our community through higher education.”

ACCT also recognized the District’s leadership and workforce, which is more than 36 percent ethnically diverse. The District had previously been honored with ACCT’s Equity Award for the Pacific Region.

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About Seattle Colleges

The [Seattle College District](#) is Washington state’s largest college district, with nearly 50,000 students enrolled each year. It is comprised of Seattle Central College, North Seattle College, South Seattle College, Seattle Vocational Institute and four specialty centers. The District offers more than 135 workforce education and training programs that lead to bachelor’s degrees in high-growth industries, associate degrees in various disciplines, certificates in professional-technical programs and transfer degrees to universities throughout the United States.

About ACCT

The Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT) is a non-profit educational organization of governing boards, representing more than 6,500 elected and appointed trustees who govern over 1,200 community, technical, and junior colleges in the United States and beyond. For more information, go to www.acct.org.

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