



PRESS RELEASE

Contra Costa Community College District
500 Court Street
Martinez, CA 94553
www.4cd.edu

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Contact:

Timothy Leong, Public Information Officer
(925) 229-6823
tleong@4cd.edu

Contra Costa Community College District Announces Four Finalists for CCC President

MARTINEZ, California – The Contra Costa Community College District (District) has announced the selection of four finalists for the position of President of Contra Costa College. The finalists are: Dr. Celia Barberena, Krista Johns, J.D., Mojdeh Mehdizadeh, and Dr. Luis Pedraja.

Public forums starting at Noon have been scheduled on Thursday, March 3, 2016, where the four finalists will make statements and answer questions. The consecutive forums will be 45 minutes each and held at the Jean & John Knox Center, 2600 Mission Bell Drive, San Pablo, California. The forums are open to the community, students, faculty and staff.



Dr. Celia Barberena started her career in higher education with the purpose of providing outreach, support services and instruction to non-traditional populations. She developed the Matriculation Plan for non-English speakers at Sacramento City College, including literature for ESL learners written in four languages, English, Spanish, Chinese and Vietnamese. She advanced through the administrative ranks serving as Dean of Special Programs at Modesto Junior College, Vice President for Student Services at Hartnell College and later President of Chabot College. While at Hartnell College, Dr. Barberena developed several multi-million dollar grants in partnership with area schools to create a “college-going culture” at an early age and improve the academic preparation

of under-represented students. At Chabot, she worked with stakeholders to build state of the art facilities financed by state funds and local bond resources. Currently she works as a consultant engaging agencies that promote the educational advancement of the Monterey County youth and immigrant communities and looks forward to providing a fresh perspective to strengthen college partnerships with high schools, governmental agencies, business and industry.



Krista Johns, J.D., is the Interim President at Berkeley City College (BCC). She had served at BCC as Vice President of Instruction prior to working at the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (ACCJC) as Vice President for Policy and Research. Ms. Johns previously served for seven years in the Contra Costa Community College District as Dean of English and Business at Diablo Valley College. Before joining the California Community Colleges, she worked at the University of Mississippi, and University of Nevada-Reno. Ms. Johns has a Juris Doctorate from IIT Chicago-Kent College of Law, and a

bachelor of arts degree in political science from the University of Wisconsin-Parkside. She is a fellow of the Community College Leadership Development Institute and has published articles and monographs on learning, change management, and various legal topics.



Mojdeh Mehdizadeh began her tenure as Interim President at Contra Costa College in January 2015. Her former role was Executive Vice Chancellor of Education and Technology at the Contra Costa Community College District. With more than 25 years of experience in higher education, she began her career at Diablo Valley College in the area of student services and later institutional research. Ms. Mehdizadeh's responsibilities included support of the colleges' educational programs, student services, workforce and economic development, information technology, international education, research and planning, and grants. She has also served as adjunct faculty in Speech Communications and is actively engaged in state and national

associations. Ms. Mehdizadeh holds an M.A. in Organizational and Intercultural Communications from Cal State University East Bay and a B.S. in Computer Information Systems from San Francisco State University. Mojdeh completed her undergraduate general education requirements at Diablo Valley College and is proud of her roots in the community college system.



Dr. Luis G. Pedraja has served as the Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs at Antioch University Los Angeles since July 2011. From 2004 through 2011, he served as Vice President for the Middle States Commission on Higher Education. Dr. Pedraja has also served as Vice President of Academia Affairs and Dean at Memphis Theological Seminary, professor at Southern Methodist University, and taught philosophy and religion at the University of Puget Sound. A native Spanish speaker and liaison to many Puerto Rican institutions, he is an outspoken advocate for greater access to higher education for underserved populations. The first in his family to attend college, Dr. Pedraja earned a Ph.D. from the

University of Virginia, a M.Div. from Southern Seminary, and a B.A. from Stetson University.

Contra Costa College is one of three colleges in the Contra Costa Community College District and currently serves almost 11,000 students (unduplicated head county) annually. Since 1948, CCC has provided exemplary educational services to hundreds of thousands of residents from the greater West County area, and is proud of its diverse student body and commitment to individual student success. Excellent programs such as the Center for Science Excellence, *The Advocate* newspaper, the green Automotive Services program, Middle College High School, the Nursing program, and the Culinary Arts program are known through the state and the nation. A model of excellence, Contra Costa College prides itself on being one of the finest community colleges in the country.

The Contra Costa Community College District (CCCCD) is one of the largest multi-college community college districts in California. The CCCCDC serves a population of 1,019,640 people, and its boundaries encompass all but 48 of the 734-square-mile land area of Contra Costa County. The District is home to Contra Costa College in San Pablo, Diablo Valley College in Pleasant Hill, Los Medanos College in Pittsburg, as well as educational centers in Brentwood and San Ramon. The District headquarters is located in downtown Martinez.

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