



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NCCHC Announces 2025 Award Winners Recognizing Visionary Leadership in Community College Education and Hispanic Student Success

Sacramento, CA— August 25, 2025 —The National Community College Hispanic Council (NCCHC) is thrilled to announce the recipients of its prestigious 2025 awards, honoring exceptional leaders who have demonstrated transformative commitment to equity, access, and success for Hispanic students in community colleges. These awards celebrate individuals whose innovative approaches and dedication have made lasting impacts on their institutions, communities, and the broader landscape of higher education.

The award winners will be recognized during a special ceremony at the Concilio (NCCHC) Leadership Symposium 2025 – *Luz, Comunidad y Unidad: Iluminando Caminos Juntos* – on September 26, 2025, at 12:00 p.m. in Long Beach, CA. The symposium brings together educators, administrators, and advocates to explore strategies for advancing Hispanic student achievement and institutional excellence.

2025 NCCHC AWARD WINNERS:

Dolores Huerta, Civil Rights Icon

Award: Icono Award— This award honors

Dolores Huerta, co-founder of the United Farm Workers Association, is one of the most influential labor leaders of the 20th century. Working alongside César Chávez, she helped lead

the historic Delano grape strike, organized nationwide boycotts, and fought for laws securing farm workers' rights to organize, fair wages, and safer working conditions.

A fearless activist for over six decades, Huerta has also championed women's rights, political empowerment, and social justice. Her lifelong commitment has earned her national recognition, including the Eleanor Roosevelt Human Rights Award and the Presidential Medal of Freedom. Today, she continues her mission through the Dolores Huerta Foundation, inspiring new generations to stand for equity and justice.

Juan Salgado, Chancellor, City Colleges of Chicago

Award: Liderazgo Visionario CEO Award – *This award honors a CEO whose visionary leadership has significantly benefited their community college and its Hispanic student population.*

Chancellor Juan Salgado, a proud community college graduate and MacArthur Fellow, has led City Colleges of Chicago – Illinois's largest community college system serving over 66,000 students, the majority of whom are Black and Latinx – since 2017. Under his guidance, the system has achieved record-high graduation rates and implemented groundbreaking initiatives such as Fresh Start (a debt-forgiveness program), Future Ready (no-cost short-term credentials), the Chicago Roadmap (a partnership with Chicago Public Schools), and a dramatic expansion of dual enrollment opportunities. His prior role as CEO of Instituto del Progreso Latino further solidified his legacy in integrating education, workforce development, and citizenship services for immigrant communities. Salgado's equity-driven approach addresses systemic barriers like financial insecurity and housing instability through comprehensive supports, making City Colleges a national model for inclusive excellence.

Salgado was nominated by Isaac Zuniga, Executive Vice President of Academic and Student Success at Richland Community College, who stated, "Chancellor Salgado embodies visionary leadership rooted in justice, innovation, and a fierce commitment to student success."

David Vela, Trustee, Los Angeles Community College District

Award: Campeón Trustee Award – *This award honors an individual who has demonstrated exceptional leadership in community college policy and at the community level.*

Trustee David Vela, a lifelong advocate for Latino students, serves on the board of the Los Angeles Community College District (LACCD), the nation's largest community college system. With a background in public service, including roles in the Montebello Unified School District and as a senior deputy to LA County Supervisor Gloria Molina, Vela has championed policies that enhance student retention, equitable resource allocation, and transfer pathways to four-year universities. His efforts have focused on uplifting first-generation and low-income Latino students through academic rigor, community engagement, and economic development initiatives. As founder of Honor PAC, he continues to promote equitable representation in education and government.

Nominated by Mike Munoz, President of Long Beach City College, Vela's work reflects a deep-rooted commitment to turning community colleges into engines of upward mobility for underserved communities.

Susana Turowski, Title V Retention Specialist, Student Success & Retention, Chandler-Gilbert Community College

Award: Avanza Leadership Award – *This award recognizes a promising emerging leader making significant contributions to community colleges or the Hispanic community. It includes a scholarship for participation in a Concilio Leadership Development program.*

Susana Turowski has emerged as a dynamic force at Chandler-Gilbert Community College, where she advises the Latinx Student Organization (LSO) and leads the Title V Retention and Transition Services team. Her initiatives foster inclusivity, cultural celebration, and student empowerment, creating spaces for leadership development and community building. Turowski's implementation of the college's first non-credit ESL program has expanded access for English language learners, while her empathetic approach breaks down barriers to support student persistence and success. Her collaborative leadership style emphasizes empathy, accountability, and a focus on underserved populations.

Turowski was nominated by Felicia Ramirez-Perez, Dean at Chandler-Gilbert Community College, who praised Turowski as "a listener, a motivator, and a change-maker who uplifts those around her and remains focused on long-term goals."

"These award winners exemplify the innovative and compassionate leadership needed to advance equity and opportunity for Hispanic students in community colleges. Their contributions inspire us all to illuminate paths together, as reflected in this year's symposium theme." - NCCHC President, Mike Munoz

The NCCHC Leadership Symposium offers workshops, keynote sessions, and networking opportunities to empower community college leaders in serving diverse student populations. For more information or to register, visit the NCCHC website, <https://www.ncchc.com/annual-leadership-symposium/>

About the National Community College Hispanic Council (NCCHC)

The National Community College Hispanic Council (NCCHC) is a non-profit organization dedicated to promoting the academic and professional success of Hispanic students in community colleges. Through advocacy, leadership development programs, and collaborative initiatives, NCCHC works to eliminate barriers and foster environments where Hispanic students can thrive. For more information, visit www.ncchc.org.

Contact:

Kimberly Andosca, NCCHC Executive Director
916-231-8970
kandosca@amgroup.us