Fifteen Minutes of Fame Feature #8

MORENO VALLEY COLLEGE

MISSION

Responsive to the educational needs of its region, Moreno Valley College offers academic programs and student support services which include baccalaureate transfer, professional, pre-professional, and pre-collegiate curricula for all who can benefit from them. Lifelong learning opportunities are provided, especially, in health and public service preparation.

VISION

Moreno Valley College is committed to exceeding the expectations of students, community, faculty, and staff by providing and expanding opportunities for learning, personal enrichment, and community development.

VALUES

- Recognition for Our Heritage of Excellence
- Passion for Learning
- Respect for Collegiality
- Appreciation of Diversity
- Dedication to Integrity
- Commitment to Community Building
- Commitment to Accountability

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MORENO VALLEY COLLEGE PROFILE

Founding
• Planning for the college began in 1987 with a donation of land
• Opened as a campus of the Riverside Community College District in 1991

Students Total Head Count
10,426 (Fall 2009, credit)

Gender
Female: 55%
Male: 45%

Age
Less than 20: 29%
20 - 24: 30%
25 - 34: 21%
35 and above: 19%

Ethnicity
African American: 15%
Asian: 7%
Hispanic: 42%
White: 26%
Other: 10%

Student Load
< 6 units: 38%
6 to 11 units: 34%
> 11 units: 28%

Goals (Student Self-Reported)
Transfer: 60%
Improve career options: 24%
Undecided: 16%
MORENO VALLEY COLLEGE GOALS
(From the Moreno Valley Integrated Strategic Plan, 2010-2015)

1. ACADEMIC PROGRAMS
Strengthen and expand Moreno Valley College Academic Programs to increase Student Success and achieve state and national prominence in General Education, allied Health, Public Safety Programs, Pre-collegiate Education.

2. STUDENT SERVICES
Develop and expand effective Student Services programs that will increase student access, retention, and completion.

3. LIFE-LONG LEARNING
Provide more opportunities to students, faculty, staff, and community to participate in life-long learning experiences.

4. FINANCIAL RESOURCES
Ensure sufficient revenue streams that will support and sustain Moreno Valley College’s Academic, Student Services, and Business Services Programs.

5. TECHNOLOGY
Improve the utilization of technological resources and develop the infrastructure necessary to advance the technological innovations that will support academic, student services, and Business Services Divisions.

6. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT
Provide resources and opportunities to faculty and staff in order to enhance professional skills.

7. FACILITIES
(A) Renovate and expand existing facilities, and (B) construct new facilities in order to accommodate Moreno Valley College program needs.

8. STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES
Provide support to provide the full implementation (identification, assessment, and improvement) of student learning outcomes for courses, programs, and the institution by 2012.
Inveterate traveler Lisa Conyers holds a Ph.D. in comparative literature from UC Riverside, an M.A. in Spanish from New York University, and a B.A. in Spanish from UC Riverside. She lived in Mexico and Spain for eight years, and was a Fulbright Exchange Administrator in Thailand. She was the Dean of Instruction/General Education at Mt. San Jacinto College before taking on her administrative assignment at Moreno Valley College, where she has been the CIO since 1996. For the last eight years she has served on the Riverside County Board of Education.

**N&V: You’ve managed to see a lot of the world over the years.**

**LC:** Yes, I started traveling as a very young woman and still travel extensively—now, with my husband, Dr. Dipen Bhattacharya, a physicist and science fiction writer. Last summer, we toured the very high Himalayas by private vehicle, crossing the highest motorable summit on earth at over 18,000 feet.

**N&V: In a few sentences, tell the story of how you came to be at Riverside Moreno Valley and became its chief instructional officer.**

**LC:** Returning to the USA in 1992 after a three-year administrative assignment in Spain, I was hired in a tenure-track position in Spanish at the then Moreno Valley Campus of the Riverside Community College District. After four extremely valuable and rewarding years teaching, I rejoined the administrative ranks in which I had previously served, although in different systems.

**N&V: Did you enjoy your return to the classroom?**

**LC:** Oh yes. One special goal I had was to develop an applied language and culture degree in bilingual interpretation. That program—which employs a tenured faculty member—has never waned in enrollment since its initiation, and has served as a model at other institutions. Developing it gave me experience and skills that I was able to transfer to the development and administration of health science and other career technical programs.

**N&V: What attracted you to the community college setting?**

**LC:** I think it was my own experience at Mt. San Antonio, where I earned my A.A. I am still in contact with one of my MSAC professors of 40 years ago. I am a first-generation college attendee and sincerely honored to have had opportunities to dedicate my professional life to the CCC system.

**N&V: What makes Moreno Valley College unique?**

**LC:** Moreno Valley College (founded in 1991) and the City of Moreno Valley (incorporated in 1984) came into being contemporaneously. The diversity of the city is reflected in the college’s student body. Nationally accredited programs such as the Physician Assistant (in formal institutional partnership with Riverside County Regional Medical Center), Dental Hygiene/Assisting, and Paramedic Programs draw students from the broader region, as do Law Enforcement and Fire Technology Programs at the Ben Clark Training Center.

**N&V: Why should students choose Moreno Valley College over other places?**

**LC:** The campus environment is collegial and upbeat. Our faculty are committed and talented. Students value the college and have high expectations regarding what is offered. Our health science and public safety education programs are widely recognized, but make no mistake—our transfer and basic skills curricula engage high-spirited, creative faculty who advocate relentlessly for their disciplines and overall student success.
N&V: What do you like about your work at the college?

LC: Well, as I mentioned before, in the early years, I was most energized by curriculum and program development. Program development was part of defining and declaring our place in the greater community and in the Riverside District. Over the years, I have evolved, by way of my changes in position, to support other employees in the incubation of their ideas. I enjoy the endless problem solving of administration.

I enjoy, also, contributing to the memorialization of our history and quest for improvement through the accreditation process. My own special projects at present include service learning and international program development.

N&V: What’s tough about your job?

LC: The new budget exigencies have hit like a shockwave on campus, throughout our District, and among students. Meeting with students and hearing their fears about section cuts keeps me poignantly mindful of the life pathways we represent for them.

N&V: It certainly wasn’t like this when I went to college.

LC: Hardly! When I was a full-time student at Mt. Sac in the early 1970s, such fears were not part of my experience. Moreover, for my generation, employment opportunities in the community for working students like me were abundant.

Present-day students are positioned for despair, as they perceive college and university courses becoming scarce and employment opportunities non-existent. This is the time to work to keep cuts away from the classroom, and, at least, to ensure that we have the best plans available when sharing unprecedented immediate and long-range realities with our students.

N&V: What major challenges has the college addressed over the last ten years?

LC: Moving from campus to accredited college has required focus and the dedication of resources. Like all colleges, we seem to be in a perpetual accreditation reporting mode, but achieving stand-alone college status was a huge benchmark for us. The college has also experienced senior-level administrative turnover, which has inevitably impacted the strategic planning process.

N&V: Speaking of planning, what major planning initiatives will the college implement over the next five or ten years?

LC: Funding from Measure C, a $350 million capital bond passed by the voters in 2004, finally, will show itself in the form of long-awaited building upgrades and construction. Ironically, we are now initiating construction projects that may need to be explained to our constituents, given the budget reductions affecting section offerings. In recent years, the health science programs have experienced vibrant expansion (calling into question the management of a balanced college mission), and the public safety programs are now part of the development of a formal off-campus center.

N&V: What else would you like your fellow CIOs to know about Moreno Valley College?

LC: Many of us here love this college. Moreno Valley College is a place I have never wanted to leave it in order to advance my career. Simply said, being among the inaugural employee group, I know the stories interwoven into our history—the joys and triumphs, the project failures, the professional rises and falls. In 1993, the active March Air Force Base became the much smaller March Air Reserve Base, forever changing the social landscape of our area and contributing to real estate abandonment and a long-standing enrollment dip.

After 19 years, I know the unwritten stories of campus friendships, of extraordinary projects that have lifted our college to national prominence, of the wildlife (mountain lions, deer, snakes) pushed further away each year by community development, and of campus trees planted to commemorate fallen students and employees. I cherish personal memories, too, such as the time the Facilities crew planted flowers around my parking space when I got a promotion!

I have matured and grown better at what I do, like my colleagues. And, like my colleagues, I still hold my breath that our students will succeed, hold back my tears at commencement, and now am holding out for better times when our students will not be faced by section cuts and the lack of a job in a region now enduring 18% unemployment.
Don Berz, Carter Doran Award Winner 2010-2011

A MAN FOR ALL SEASONS

After receiving his higher education degrees in Political Science from the University of Colorado (Boulder), and from the University of California (Berkeley) Don Berz went on to serve for 48 years in California higher education. His assignments have included professor of Political Science at UC Berkeley and assistant dean, executive dean, vice chancellor, and acting chancellor in the community college system. He retired in June of 2004 after 15 years as Executive Vice President of Chaffey College, but returned to serve as the CIO at Long Beach City College for the last six years. He has also been consulting extensively in California and nationally.

N&V: Don you have received numerous honors and recognition awards from such organizations as the American Association of Community Colleges, the American Association of Higher Education, the American Council on Education, ACCCA—and now you've received the Doran Award. Congratulations!

DB: Thank you. It is a pleasure to be honored by this organization.

N&V: Why did you become a community college administrator?

DB: To make a difference on a broader scale in the education of students, so that I may facilitate and support student learning and continue to find better ways to advance student success.

N&V: Have you had mentors along the way?

DB: Oh yes, I have had a number of mentors in my professional life. They have included John Dunn, Paul Elsner, Tom Fryer, Ernie Berg, Terry O’Banion, Jerry Young. All have been presidents and/or chancellors. Dr. O’Banion is the President Emeritus of the League for Innovation.

N&V: What is most rewarding about the CIO job?

DB: Facilitating and contributing to the growth, renewal, and the development of others—management peers, faculty, support staff, and above all, students.

N&V: You've been an observer of and a participant in the state level issues of the California community colleges for many years now. Have you seen any particular trends or evolution over, say, the last decade, either within the system or beyond?

DB: Absolutely. I have noted one particular trend, most recently, and it is very troubling: fiscal policy is determining educational policy.

Also, as Walter Bumphus, the new President and CEO of the American Association of Community Colleges noted in his keynote speech at the Association’s convention in April, 2011, the focus of our colleges over many years has been on providing access, but success is not embedded in our culture. The most pressing problem facing our community colleges, not only here in California but across the country, is to support student success while we continue to provide access. As Dr. Terry O’Banion recently stated, "The challenge is clear: create student success pathways that can, in the next two decades, double the number of students who complete a certificate or an Associate’s degree, or who transfer to earn a Bachelor’s degree that has market-place value. And ensure that these pathways work for the large number of students..."
who are underprepared, from lower socio-economic backgrounds, and first-generation college students.”

The establishment of an open-access, comprehensive, community college has been one of the most important developments in our country’s history. Helping to keep this concept alive and vital should be a primary professional goal of all of us. The philosophical basis of this feeling comes from the relationship between education and an effectively functioning democracy. The purpose of education is to develop self-directed, continuing learners who have the motivation and perspective to question and improve the conditions of any environment in which they find themselves. This level of education not only helps to keep individuals renewed, but also makes it easier for our organizations and society to be flexible, adaptive, innovative, and self-correcting. These are essential ingredients for a successful democracy. California community colleges are best positioned (philosophically and logistically) to help a significant number of individuals achieve this level of education and therefore, make a positive impact on the strength of our communities, not only in California but our country.

In other words, our greatest strength lies in the foundation and fundamental values embraced by the community college. We should never forget that we are a democratizing institution! We help students achieve academic and career goals. We help students overcome academic deficiencies and to acquire the skills they need to become effective, independent learners. We not only prepare students to earn a living, but also prepare them to live creative, humane and sensitive lives with the capacity for lifelong learning as responsible members of society. But if our community colleges lose their ability to change—to be flexible, adaptive, innovative, and self-correcting—we will lose our unique place in our system of higher education.

N&V: Do you think we’re losing it now?

DB: I fear I do. I sense that many of our colleges have become shackled by regulations and laws which restrict our governance, our policies, our ways of doing business to the point that we have become over-bureaucratized. In fact, with the extraordinary number of regulations on administrators, faculty, and students, not to mention ever more complex union contracts, one might say that at our colleges’ behavior has become all too codified.

Change under these circumstances is exceedingly difficult. We develop cycles and processes to evaluate initiatives or proposals, and all too often these cycles and processes become barriers to innovation and change. Even the categorization of knowledge is arbitrary and limiting. Our colleges need to break down the boundaries that make them rigid and unresponsive.

N&V: How does that get done?

DB: That’s where leadership comes in—what we were talking about at the spring conference in Monterey. A responsibility of leadership is to develop strategies for unfreezing faculty and staff from existing attitudes and behaviors. Once traditional boundaries of hierarchy, function, turfdom, and the like disappear, a new set of boundaries will emerge, hopefully characterized by more flexibility. It is the act of innovation that is regenerative, renewing and fosters change.

N&V: With all you’ve done and continue to do and your commitment and dedication to community colleges, I’m wondering if you have trouble separating your professional life from your personal life.

DB: No, I have no trouble doing that. I learned over the years to engage in interests and activities of enjoyment that have contributed to providing balance. Those things complement the intensity of one’s professional life. Taking some time out each and every day to do something for myself was one, among many other things, that I learned from my mentors. I have learned that you are no good to your family, friends or your job unless or until you first attend to yourself.

Good health does not just happen! In between consultancies, and administrative assignments I have always found time for my family, my lovely wife of 43 years, two sons, four grandchildren, golf, some travel, writing and visiting with friends throughout the country.

N&V: What advice would you give to new instructional deans and new CIOs?

DB: Remember, to provide educational leadership. It plays out through other people—indirectly—so you support, encourage, and motivate others. Impact flows from expectations (positive and negative).

Successful leaders energize their constituencies and those with whom they work. If your leadership does not create more energy in them than they would have without you, then you are not leading. You are leading when you learn to manage the job, not have the job manage you!

And always remember, “any fool can criticize, complain, condemn, and most fools do.” Be cognizant that as a leader, you will make a lot of decisions. By the end of it, you should develop a friends list and an enemies list. The important thing is to be proud of both lists, and move on.
RETIREES TAKE A LAST LOOK BACK

We asked two CIOs who are retiring this year, Cheryl Munsey (Copper Mountain) and Norm Fujimoto (Mount San Antonio) to give us their “Top Ten Most...” lists. Amazingly, because they are such good sports, they did! Read on....

1. Most pleasant part of the CIO job: Working with my deans and other CIOs to help make Santa Ana College a better place for our students.
2. Least pleasant part of the CIO job: BUDGET!!!
3. Most inspiring mentor: There are many people that have been great mentors to me during my career. When I became a CIO, there were four people that were very helpful and took me under their wings. Mary Halverson, Melinda Nish, Don Berz, and Jeff Shimizu were not only mentors but have become friends.
4. Stupidest mistake: We’ve all made mistakes along the way and hopefully have learned from them. I know I’ve made my share. Right now I can’t single out one.
5. Biggest victory: The great progress that we have made in Basic Skills at Santa Ana College.
6. Darkest hour: When our district did the first round of layoffs.
7. Happiest memory: There are many memorable times during my 37 years in education. I really enjoy seeing and talking to former students that have been successful in their own careers.
8. Toughest decision: Cutting sections due to workload reductions and deciding what positions were going to be eliminated.
9. Most unbelievable (funny, weird, etc.) experience: It seemed like every time I said never, it happened. My mother was a teacher so I said I never would be a teacher but ended up being a teacher. While I was teaching I said I would never be an administrator but ended up being an administrator. I gave up saying never!
10. Best advice I ever got: When I first became an administrator, a veteran administrator told me that I needed to learn to leave work problems at work and not take them home. It was great advice that I’ve tried to follow.

1. Most pleasant – Without a doubt, conducting interviews for new F/T faculty. Although ours is a small district, we are in a position to hire 8-10 new tenure-track faculty members for the fall ’11 semester. It’s a large responsibility – one that will impact our college for the next 20+ years! I’ve met so many talented, dedicated professionals anxious to enter our profession.
2. Least pleasant – Letting a faculty member go due to poor performance.
3. Inspiring mentor – I haven’t really had a CIO mentor, but would credit my current Superintendent/President, Dr. Roger Wager, as the individual who encouraged me to accept this interim position. (Or was that begging?)
4. Stupidest mistake – Here is the latest one: thinking that my Division Chair was relaying my message to faculty. There was a bit of ‘editing’ that would never have occurred had I just ‘done it myself.’
5. Biggest victory – Getting a foot in the door to potentially make MORE changes to the faculty evaluation process.
6. Darkest hour – I rarely sleep, so there apparently aren’t any ‘dark hours.’
7. Happiest memory – I think that is yet to come! I hope once this job is behind me I’ll have more time to reflect!
8. Toughest decision – Do I give an unsatisfactory employee another opportunity to improve, or let the individual go?
9. Most unbelievable – Copper Mountain had been separated from College of the Desert for a number of years and in reviewing the schedule of classes I asked our Spanish instructor to check the translation in the schedule for the ESL courses advertised. It turned out the language had been ‘borrowed’ (and kept) from College of the Desert! We were directing our ESL students to the 2nd-story of “the building behind the fountain” for classes. We don’t have ANY 2-story buildings. I can’t imagine the confusion caused with a population struggling to learn English.
10. Best advice – Take your lunch hour!
Greetings CIOs:

I’d like to thank everyone that attended our Spring Conference in Monterey. It was a different sort of conference for us, with a great deal of time devoted to discussions of where we want to go and who we want to be as community colleges of the future. We developed seven “statewide visions” and four “local visions.” Allow me to restate those:

**Statewide Visions**
1. Work toward deregulation, i.e., reducing/rewriting/eliminating regulations that restrict the ability to function effectively
2. Increase leveraging opportunities to create statewide economies of scale, in areas such as collective bargaining, data collection, etc.
3. Create seamless transitions from K-12 to community colleges to CSUs and UCs
4. Build leadership capacity and develop sustainable leadership
5. Go beyond re-engineering what we have and instead engineer a true statewide community college system
6. Create new budget solutions within the existing system
7. Maintain student success as the focus of everything we do

**Local Visions**
1. Become truly student centered with student success as the primary goal, including course certificate and degree completions
2. Develop a district governance which is mission centered
3. Develop an engaged staff committed to excellence in all areas, especially in effective teaching and learning
4. Be flexible, adaptable, and responsive to the community

These are audacious agendas, but we need to dream big and act bold. Now that we have vision, we need to develop the plans to implement and realize those ideas. This is an important time for us to work more closely with our partners in the system, the CEOs, the CSSOs, the Senate, the League and all of our administrators in the Chancellor’s Office. I am actively pursuing means to increase and improve our partnership with these constituencies and will be working with the executive board to further our partnership opportunities. The CEOs are visioning as well, with the League leading this group in the development of a budget principles document. The last draft of this document was distributed in my Consultation Council Update for April. The CSSOs are taking positions on LAO recommendations. This allows us as CIOs to easily find common ground that supports our statewide and local visions.

I would like to thank you for the good work being done in the field to develop SB 1440 compliant degrees aligned with the TMCs. This has been a huge effort and the Chancellor’s Office is seeing the increase of new degree applications coming in. The majority of the CSUs are firmly in support of the TMCs and we are looking forward to seeing our first students use these for transfer next year. This project supports our goal of seamless transitions as well as our student success focus.

Finally, I urge you to keep yourselves well informed concerning pending legislation. There are many education-related bills in the works, including AB 515, which would allow districts to create credit extension programs with locally determined fees. This bill is potentially an idea that supports our goal of deregulation, and new budget solutions, but has been criticized as now being aligned with the philosophy of “equal access.” This is will be a very interesting area for debate and dialogue. Again, I urge you to become informed and involved in the discussion. The link to the bill is [http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/pub/11-12/bill/asm/ab_0501-0550/ab_515_bill_20110427_amended_asm_v97.pdf](http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/pub/11-12/bill/asm/ab_0501-0550/ab_515_bill_20110427_amended_asm_v97.pdf)

I welcome your feedback, your opinions, and ideas. It has been my honor to serve and represent you this year.

Please accept my best wishes for the close of your spring semesters. There is nothing better than participating in graduation exercises – a perfect means of reminding us that our students’ success is the overarching goal of everything we do.

—Melinda Nish
BIG IDEAS DOMINATE MONTEREY MEETING

There was a reflective mood at this year’s spring conference, thanks to an agenda that emphasized discussion of “big ideas” over the daily challenges of instructional leadership. The combination of highly interactive sessions and provocative observations from knowledgeable speakers reconfirmed the important leadership role that CIOs must play at their colleges and in the state.

HIGHLIGHTS

Wednesday’s luncheon speaker was Dr. Bernadine Fong, former CIO and President of Foothill College, now with the Carnegie Foundation, who set the tone by urging us not to “let the urgent pre-empt the important.” She stressed the need to “over-communicate” as a way to build trust, to have a strategy before you speak, and to remember that you may need “to ask why five times” before you get the real answer. At Foothill, she said, they converted the shared governance model, which can devolve into a struggle for power, into a mission-based model, in which the constituent groups focus on the mission of the college—student learning.

ASCCC President Jane Patton’s presentation focused mainly on a big idea whose time may finally have arrived: a nearly seamless transfer process, now codified in SB 1440. There is some foot-dragging within the CSU system, but Patton and other CC leaders are optimistic that the project will succeed. Sixteen to eighteen CSU campuses have already accepted the first three transfer model curricula (TMCs).

Retired CIO John Spevak (Merced) and perennial CIO Don Berz (Long Beach) facilitated an interactive session on leadership opportunities and challenges.

Wednesday’s dinner was combined with the general meeting. New CIO Kimberlee Messina (Foothill) and interim CIO Diane Dieckmeyer (Norco) were introduced, and retiring CIOs Norm Fujimoto (Mt SAC) and Cheryl Munsey (Copper Mountain) were honored. The evening ceremonies concluded with the presentation of the sixth Carter Doran Award to Don Berz.

On Thursday, after breakfast and regional meetings, WICHE President David Longanecker presented “The Case Again for Whopping Big Change, With or Without Disruption,” expanding on the themes he presented at the fall CIO meeting. In the afternoon, College Brain Trust Director Rocky Young facilitated a two-part interactive session exploring how CIOs and the CIO organization could influence the state agenda as well as local and regional agendas over the next several years. The day concluded with the President’s Reception.

Friday began with a general meeting, after which Terence Willet described the strengths of the CalPASS Smart Tool and Steve Thyberg and George Thomas, representing the conference sponsor, described CurricUNET and Governet. The day concluded with Stephanie Lowe from the Chancellor’s Office, who told a story about trains and railroaded us through several whistle-stops of technical topics so that we all could stay on track. (Sorry, I couldn’t resist—editor.)

QUOTE OF THE CONFERENCE:

“If you’re not already both the CIO and the CSSO, trust me, it’s coming.”

—Meredith Randall
Mendocino College

NB: Click on http://ccccio.org/ for speakers’ PowerPoint presentations.
SPRING CONFERENCE PHOTO GALLERY

Wednesday

Keynote Speaker “Bernie” Fong

President Nish’s Welcome

Conference Guest Listens Attentively

Wednesday’s Opening Luncheon
Jane Patton Provides Senate Update
Berz & Spevak on Leadership and Challenges

Leadership and challenges

Meredith Randall Thanks the BS Team
Outgoing interim CIO
Eloise Orrell, Foothill

Incoming CIO Kimberlee Messina, Foothill

Retiring CIO Norm Fujimoto, Mt. Sac

Interim CIO Diane Dieckmeyer, Norco

Don Berz Receives Doran Award from Pres. Nish and Last Year’s Doran Winner Barry Russell
Thursday
Breakfast & Regional Meetings
Friday

Steve Thyberg & George Thomas from CurricUNET/Governet

Dennis Gerwin Thanks Terence Willet for CalPASS Presentation

Stephanie Lowe Presents Updates from the Chancellor’s Office