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Dr. Annebelle Nery Recognized for Work Supporting Students with Disabilities

Veteran educator honored by California Association for Postsecondary Education and Disability

College of the Desert's Dr. Annebelle Nery was named the 2021 Administrator of the Year by the California Association for Postsecondary Education and Disability (CAPED) for her work ensuring equal learning opportunities for people with disabilities.

Each year, CAPED recognizes an outstanding administrator who acknowledges the college's responsibility for the education of all learners and who has consistently supported the disability services office as a vital program to the success of students.

"Dr. Nery has long been a champion for students with disabilities," said Leslie Quiñones, Director of the College's Disabled Students Programs and Services (DSPS).

"My department is extremely grateful that Dr. Nery's leadership has prioritized equity for students with disabilities," Quiñones said. "She embodies the College's values of diversity and inclusion and respect."

As the former Vice President of Student Success, she consistently advocated for appropriate funding for DSPS.

"Dr. Nery's approach is student-centered. She always asks, 'What do students need to be successful?' then identifies funding to support it," Quiñones said.

After transitioning to her current role as Vice President of Instruction, Dr. Nery brought with her an equity lens, supporting faculty to ensure all instructional materials are accessible and advocating for Universal Design for Learning, a framework for optimizing teaching and learning for all.

This fall, Dr. Nery supported Paul Grossman, a retired civil rights attorney for the U.S. Department of Education, to present to faculty and staff.

"While disability can be overlooked in the diversity, equity, and inclusion discussion, Dr. Nery never fails to include students with disabilities in these conversations," said Amanda Phillips, Dean of Counseling Services.

As a first-generation college student herself, Dr. Nery is an equity advocate with significant work in social justice. The College has received state and national recognition with Dr. Nery's leadership; she helped found the College's acclaimed EDGE/pLEDGE program, widely recognized for combining national best practices to support students from the onboarding process to completion.

Dr. Nery is a veteran educator, administrator, and trailblazer in the education arena, having worked in higher education for nearly 25 years, 14 of those at College of the Desert. She earned her Ph.D. in sociology with an emphasis in statistics and organization and race, class and gender studies at the University of California, Riverside.

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