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For More Information:

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College of the Desert Named Statewide Latinx 'Equity Champion'

College of the Desert was honored with the 2021 Equity Champion of Higher Education Award for the high proportion of its Latinx students who earn Associate Degrees for Transfer (ADT) relative to overall campus rates.

The recognition among all California community colleges was bestowed by the Campaign for College Opportunity, which works to increase access to higher education for Californians.

The percentage of College of the Desert graduates heading to a four-year university showcases the College's intentionality in ensuring student success. The award indicates "a tremendous achievement and the real work of equity," the group said.

"This is an important acknowledgment of College of the Desert's work to close achievement gaps for underrepresented students by removing financial barriers to higher education and providing ongoing support," said Superintendent/President Martha Garcia, Ed.D. "We will continue our work to influence and inspire students and develop programs and services that advance the goals of equity and inclusion for all members of our campus community."

College of the Desert will be recognized at a virtual Champions of Higher Education Celebration on Tuesday, November 16, 2021. The celebration will include honorees, students, educational representatives, elected officials, corporate sponsors, and civic and business leaders.

College of the Desert's success on behalf of Latinx students is two-pronged. It includes focused academic advising coupled with the EDGE/pLEDGE program, which provides tuition assistance and wrap-around student support services to local high school graduates to help them achieve their educational and career goals.

The result has been an overall 41 percent increase in four-year university transfers, with 59 percent of the cohort represented by Latinx students.

In September, the College was named a finalist in the national *Excellencia* in Education award for the EDGE/pLEDGE program's significant influence on the success of Latinx students.

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