

# 2022 CEO SYMPOSIUM



# 2022 CEO RETIREE HONOREES

The Chief Executive Officers of California Community Colleges are proud to recognize and honor the following CEO retirees of 2022. The Retiree Recognition Dinner will be held on Saturday, March 5th at 7:00 p.m. during the CEO Symposium.

**Greg Gillespie**, Ventura County CCD Chancellor (June 2022)

**Douglas B. Houston**, State Center CCD Deputy Chancellor (April 2022)

**G.H. Javaheripour**, Columbia College Interim President (June 2022) Prior Yuba College President

**Ed Knudson**, Antelope Valley College Superintendent/President (June 2022)

**Ronald Kraft**, Napa Valley College Superintendent/President (January 2022)

**Pamela T. Luster**, San Diego Mesa College President (June 2022)

**Kathleen A. Rose**, Gavilan College Superintendent/President (June 2022)

**David Viar**, Glendale Community College Superintendent/President (June 2022)

**John Weispfenning**, Coast CCD Chancellor (August 2022)

**Samia Yaqub**, Butte College Superintendent/President (June 2022)

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**Greg Gillespie**

**What accomplishment are you most proud of?**

Implementing changes to improve long term financial sustainability of the VCCCD.

**What advice would you give to new and continuing CEOs?**

You are a part of making great things happen. Despite the challenges... enjoy the ride!



**Doug Houston**

**What accomplishment are you most proud of?**

I don't know about "accomplishments;" everything great that I've had a hand in has been with a team of fabulous colleagues. Indeed, I have been blessed to work with so many truly outstanding professionals, many of whom are dear friends, who have inspired me with their passion, talent, and tenacity. When I left active military, after a short but wildly fulfilling career, I wasn't sure that I would find another vocation that provided the same sense of fulfillment in service to something bigger and nobler than mere ambition; our work in the community colleges has been just that.

**What advice do you give to new and continuing CEOs?**

My advice to anyone serving in senior leadership, but especially as the chief executive, is twofold: First, understand that it's your institution and own it. It is yours to cherish, to shepherd and to steward. Lead it with love; its successes are your success, and your failings are its failures. And second, understand that it's not your institution. It belongs to those it serves and who serve it. It belongs to those who came before you and who will come after you. Your time is but a chapter in a long story; honor that story and leave a legacy.

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**Ed Knudson**

**What accomplishment are you most proud of?**

The number of opportunities we were able to provide for students by strengthening our relationships with the community and rebuilding their trust.

**What advice would you give to new and continuing CEOs?**

Develop a thick hide, maintain your sense of humor, and stay focused on the desired outcome. This is a prayer I say every morning:

“Heavenly Father, thank you for the blessing of this day. Please grant me the strength, courage, and your guidance to live it well. Please grant me the wisdom to separate the valuable from the insignificant and to ignore the mindless acts. Help me to always be open and honest, forthright and trustworthy; to listen well to the thoughtful counsel of others; to be flexible when I can be, and to be steadfast when I must. Thank you for your blessings and grace and for giving me the opportunity to be of service as President of Antelope Valley College.”



**Pam Luster**

**What accomplishment are you most proud of?**

I am most proud of the work that I have done both at Mesa, and in statewide coalitions that remove barriers and promote racial justice and equity. CEOs have a unique opportunity to shape these efforts, and it has been my pleasure to join many of my colleagues in creating better systems for our students.

**What advice do you give to new and continuing CEOs?**

Find your feet first, have good mentors and actually listen to them, create a life outside of your work. Use the privilege of your position to lead others to action that continually and with laser focus improves the conditions that matter for your students to succeed.

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**Kathleen Rose**

**What accomplishment are you most proud of?**

- Leading the district to receive its largest GO Bond in 100 years, which will completely change the campus environment and build a comprehensive center in San Benito County.
- Serving as the second and longest-serving woman president at GJCCD.
- Facilitating many efforts to serve the enormous needs of our students over the years.

**What advice do you give to new and continuing CEOs?**

For the new and continuing CEOs, the words of Helen Benjamin echo in my ears from my participation in the Vineyard Retreat. She reminded us that we can love the job, but the job can't love us back. Balance is critical and often pushed aside as the role of the CEO continues to diversify with every important new initiative. The most we can do for others is work on ourselves, and leaders need to always keep self-care at the forefront.



**David Viar**

**What accomplishments are you most proud of?**

- Rebuilding the reputation of, and support for, CCCT following the firing of the previous CEO.
- Establishing the structure and services of the League which remain in place as the League continues its essential role in support of the local colleges.
- Helping scores of districts, in cooperation with the Academic Senate, implement the shared involvement in decision-making provisions of AB 1725.

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- Improving the aesthetic learning and work environment at each place I have served.
- Developing positive relations with all constituent leaders with whom I worked at each organization and college that led to improvements in student access, learning, and success.

## **What advice do you give to new and continuing CEOs?**

- What I learned, and tried to emulate, not always successfully, is that leading a community college:
- Is not about control but about contribution, collaboration, and compromise.
- It is planting the “seeds” for what you want to accomplish, being patient yet persistent, and letting others get the credit.
- And it requires not taking things personally, smiling, and remembering it is about what is best for the students.

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**John Weispenning**

**What accomplishment are you most proud of?**

I am most proud of the collaborative and collegial culture that we have built in the Coast District. By focusing on working together to solve problems, we have engaged our bargaining groups and participative governance committees in a spirit of common interest.

**What advice do you give to new and continuing CEOs?**

Keep people well informed and manage expectations. It's obvious to us what we're working on and why, but rarely to others. Letting everyone know ahead of time what negative outcomes are likely will do two things: it prepares people for a less than ideal result, and if things turn out better, you'll look like a star.



**Samia Yaqub**

**What accomplishment are you most proud of?**

I grew up with Butte College and am proud of how well the college has served our communities for the last fifty-plus years. What I am most proud of, however, is how the college came together after the Camp Fire in 2018. We mobilized quickly to take care of one another and our students. Even while the main campus was still under evacuation, we created a comprehensive support center in Chico and started two funds to help staff and students who lost homes. Everyone was reeling, but we stayed focused on helping those who needed it the most.

**What advice do you give to new and continuing CEOs?**

I received a lot of great advice when I became a CEO, but the most valuable was this: Be the voice of hope for your district. These are hard times and even the most resilient among us are feeling discouraged and overwhelmed. For this reason, CEOs need to convey optimism about the future and trust in their people to meet the challenges ahead. Great CEOs cultivate a sense of possibility and hope in others.

