Amber Chiang

From: Amber Chiang
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To: Amber Chiang
Subject: PRESS RELEASE: Bakersfield College President Named 2014 "Pacesetter of the Year"

Bakersfield College President Named 2014 “Pacesetter of the Year”

The NCMPR Pacesetter of the Year Award recognizes a president or CEO who has demonstrated leadership and support in the area of college communications and marketing.

The NCMPR District 6 2014 Pacesetter of the Year is Dr. Sonya Christian, President of Bakersfield College. Dr. Christian is a remarkable leader who creates an environment in which people are inspired, creative and supported.

Dr. Christian's vision for Bakersfield College is for the institution to be a model community college on the frontline of innovation. To move the college in this direction, she focuses on an infrastructure built upon predictive analytics, which uses historical student data to improve operational efforts. She has also utilized data to identify community and industry needs and strengthen college programs. This has resulted in the successful establishment of community partnerships and increased financial support.

Amber Chiang, Bakersfield College's director of marketing and public relations, pointed out in her nomination letter the superb job Dr. Christian has done with accreditation as well as public relations challenges. During the last accreditation cycle, the accrediting team gave Dr. Christian a commendation, which recognized the enthusiasm, community spirit and speed at which she communicated. What's more, the college successfully addressed each of the visiting team's recommendations and achieved a clear accreditation rating.

Last year, Dr. Christian was challenged by an extremely negative publicity crisis. The college's athletics program was sanctioned for rules violations and Dr. Christian had to seek balance between divergent constituencies. She found her stride and is now seen as a "banner-waving, red-wearing Bakersfield College Renegade who staunchly supports the athletics programs and the student athletes," according to Chiang.

A Bakersfield College student summed up Dr. Christian's impact on the campus perfectly when she wrote: "I see improvements in the level of morale in the activities taking place on campus. This has changed the way the college feels, from a simple commuter campus for students to come and go just for the classes, to one where students take time to
enjoy each other, take advantage of the services, and enjoy special activities designed just for them. I see an increased emphasis on student success and ensuring that each and every student makes their educational dreams come true. Under Dr. Christian's leadership, I have seen that students are the focus, and Bakersfield College is doing everything possible to make sure students reach their goals."

Dr. Christian accepted her award at the NCMPR District 6 Medallion and Award Ceremony, held September 25 in Sacramento. She will now be eligible to compete for the national award, which will be given at the 2015 NCMPR conference in Portland, Oregon.

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*The National Council for Marketing & Public Relations is the only organization of its kind that exclusively represents marketing and public relations professionals at community and technical colleges. As one of the fastest-growing affiliates of the American Association of Community Colleges, NCMPR has more than 1,550 members from more than 650 colleges across the United States, Canada and other countries.*