

Keith Curry appointed interim CEO of Compton Community College District

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By Cheryl Scott, Bulletin Staff Writer



Curry

COMPTON—The Special Trustee for the Compton Community College District announced on March 16 the appointment of an interim chief executive officer for the district. Dr. Keith Curry, who has served as the El Camino College Compton Center dean of student services since 2006, has been appointed to the post.

“Dr. Curry is widely known for his dedication to promoting and supporting programs to help students succeed and reach their academic goals,” said CCCD Special Trustee Genethia Hudley-Hayes. “His demonstrated leadership skills, ability to assess and quickly respond to student needs, and his familiarity with the Compton Center and the community are all assets he brings to this position.”

A Compton native, Curry served the community by volunteering as chair of the Compton Unified School District Achieving College Partnership and serving on the Compton Unified School District Foundation board.

He also co-authored the CUSD Gear-Up proposal during his tenure at UC Irvine, where he was dean of student services.

Many of the college’s student support programs were expanded or created under Curry’s leadership. He established the First Year Experience in 2009. The program offers a supportive educational environment that encourages student success through shared learning communities, and services such as counseling, mentoring, orientation, and campus tours. The first year of the program, 68 students participated; by the second year, enrollment in the program had reached more than 140 students.

Curry previously served at the University of California Irvine as director of the Early Academic Outreach Program. In this position, he worked with incoming freshman students to help them succeed in college. While at UC Irvine, Curry was instrumental in re-establishing a partnership between local school districts, including Compton Unified School District and the University of California, Irvine.

Curry has strong family ties to the community. His service has included volunteering as chair of the Compton Unified School District Achieving College Partnership and serving on the Compton Unified School District Foundation board. He also co-authored the Compton Unified School District Gear-Up proposal during his tenure at UC Irvine.

Curry earned his doctorate degree from the University of California at Irvine, and a bachelor's degree from the University of California at Santa Cruz.

At his appointment announcement, the mood was upbeat and full of hope for the future of the community as he spoke about his own humble beginnings and his first "job" at the district, where he served as ball boy for the college baseball team at the age of 12. "And today, I'm CEO," he said.

He also shared personal stories of his dedication to student success and of working with former gang members and at-risk teens who have earned their degrees at ECC Compton Center and transferred to both the University of California and California State University systems.

"My work has meaning because of students like Terrance, who emerged from a tough background to become an ASB officer, advocated for students, and had the determination and drive to graduate from Compton Center and transfer to UC Riverside," Curry said. "He plans to return to Compton Center possibly as a counselor and help others. That's why we are here — to provide an opportunity for all of these individuals to receive a college education."

The Compton Community College District is working with El Camino Community College to earn accreditation for the college, a prolonged and complex process that could take as long as 10 years.

"Our goal for this district is to once again have a college," said Curry. "There are some people in our communities who misunderstand the partnership and the accreditation process. That is why the special trustee and I will be hitting the road fast and furiously for visits to area elected officials, business organizations, churches and community leaders to inform and update everyone about both of these important issues.

"I look forward to this opportunity to continue serving students and my hometown," Curry said. "I am encouraged by the positive spirit of collaboration I see as we work together with our partner, El Camino College, to achieve this goal."

Curry assumed the interim CEO position on March 22. The search process for a permanent CEO, following Board Policy 2420, will get underway in the future.