

Finalist: Dr. Wei Zhou

Title: Interim Assistant Superintendent/Vice President, Dean, Academic Affairs at Cerritos College

A proud University of California, Davis, Center for Community College Leadership and Research Wheelhouse Fellow with a Ph.D. from the University of Texas at Austin's top-ranked doctoral program in education, Dr. Wei Zhou has extensive California community college administrative experience in multi-campus districts and Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs) serving large geographical areas including positions as Dean of Math, Science and Engineering at Evergreen Valley College, Vice President for Academic Affairs at Copper Mountain College, Vice President of Instruction and President at Cuyamaca College, President of Crafton Hills College and Assistant Superintendent/Vice President and Dean of Academic Affairs at Cerritos College. In addition to his own colleges, he has helped develop programming and services for colleges such as Butte College, Columbia College, Diablo Valley College, Golden West College, Merced College, Mt. San Jacinto College, Sacramento City College and Woodland Community College.

Dedicated to college access, success, equity, social justice, employee and organizational development, and community engagement, Wei has fostered an equity-minded, global vision in a learning-centered, data-informed, broad-based participatory and consultative, and integrated instructional, student, technology and administrative support services environment. Thanks to the support from talented, dedicated and hardworking faculty, staff, administrators and students during his leadership, his colleges were ranked among the nation's fastest-growing community colleges, developed innovative, award-winning on-campus and online instructional and student support programs, achieved regions' top transfer and graduation rates, joined the international Tuning project and the national Achieving the Dream project, secured multi-million dollars of federal and state grants as well as funding through business and industry partnerships and fundraising activities, expanded higher education access to underserved communities, brought baccalaureate degrees to local students, and started or strengthened programs and services to close equity gaps for low-income students, African American, Latinx, Native American, Asian American, Filipino and Pacific Islander students, student athletes, veterans, foster youth, immigrants, etc.

Wei has also fostered collaborative relationships with business and industry, K-12 schools, higher education institutions, government and community organizations, and elected officials. In addition, he has been invited to serve on a number of local, county, regional, state and national boards and committees, such as Southern California Chair of the Asian Pacific Islander American Trustees and Administrators Board, Alignment San Bernardino County Executive Board, Inland Empire Economic Partnership Workforce and Education Council, California Library and Learning Resources Program and Telecommunications and Technology Program Advisory Committees, National Association for Developmental Education Editorial Board, and National Science Foundation panels. Moreover, Wei has led statewide teams to help California community colleges on accreditation, integrated planning, enrollment management, staff and organizational development, instructional and student support program development, implementation of Guided Pathways framework, and distance education.