

CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGES CLASSIFIED EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR AWARDS PROGRAM

The Classified Employee of the Year Awards honor community college classified employees who demonstrate the highest level of commitment to the *Vision for Success* and equitable student outcomes. Recipients are nominated by their colleagues and endorsed by the local Board of Trustees. Each local Board of Trustees may forward the information for one nominee to the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office sent via email or postmarked by **March 26, 2021**. Award winners are selected by representatives from the California Community Colleges Board of Governors, Consultation Council and the Chancellor's Office. Recipients will be announced and honored at the May 2021 Board of Governors meeting. Classified employees with a minimum service of 5 years as a permanent employee within the nominating Community College District (full-time or part-time) are eligible for the award. The nominees are evaluated on their commitment to: *the Vision for Success* and equitable student outcomes; professional ethics and standards; serving the institution's diverse student population through participation in professional and/or community activities; and serving as a leader beyond their local institution.

Nominee's Name Patricia Gill **Date** February 16, 2021

STEM Services Developer

Job Title of Nominee

2001 Third Street, Norco, CA 92860 951-372-7000

Nominee Address, City, Zip Code Telephone

Riverside Community College District

Community College District

3801 Market Street, Riverside, CA 92501

Address, City, Zip Code

Wolde-Ab Isaac, Ph.D. 951-222-8795

Name of District Chancellor/College President Telephone

Disqualification warning: It is the responsibility of the nominator to initiate this nomination form and see that all pages are COMPLETELY filled out, on the CORRECT form, and NO alterations have occurred.

Signature Required.

Patti Brusca 951-372-7109 Patti Brusca
Signature of Nominator with Contact Telephone Number (Print Name)

2001 Third Street, Norco, CA 92860
Mailing Address, City, Zip Code

INITIAL NOMINATIONS MUST BE SUBMITTED TO THE LOCAL BOARD OF TRUSTEES FOR REVIEW AND ENDORSEMENT.

Name of Nominee Patricia A. Gill

14 **Years of service** with the district ***NOTE:** employees with a minimum 5 years of service as a permanent employee within the nominating Community College District (full-time or part-time) are eligible for the award.

1. Describe how the nominee demonstrates a commitment to the *Vision for Success and equitable student outcomes*? Please provide examples of the employee's demonstrated commitment.

Patricia Gill is a fierce and dedicated advocate for student success and a firm believer in educational equity for all. Her own experiences as a first generation, low income college student is a key factor in why she chose to work with programs that support the mission of Norco College. She is committed to working with student access programs that aid first generation, low income students succeed in completing their associate's degree at the community college, successfully transfer to a four-year university, complete their bachelor's degree and beyond for the past 36 years. Her RCCD career was prefaced by 22 years of service to the University of California, Riverside. The last several years of which she spent aiding students achieve their bachelor's degree, teaching credential and pursue a career in teaching elementary school and bilingual education. Those students are educators, principals and administrators today. Her own son's education as he entered middle school - those notorious troublesome years for parent and child - became her priority. This milestone led her to changing her career path. She left UCR and began working for Norco College in the TRiO Programs and then to the HSI STEM grants. These programs align with her belief in helping underserved students achieve their educational goals. She provided students with a concise educational plan - choosing courses they need, achieving their associate's degree and most importantly transferring to a four-year university and earning their bachelor's degree. [*Vision for Success Goal 1 and 2.*]

Aiding students with resources, networking them to professionals in the field, and opportunities to aid them in their educational success is vital to her. Through her tutelage, students have found successful opportunities that led them to their future careers all over the globe. Her students often return to work at Norco College as Classified Professionals, counselors, and mentors. At one time they were students and now they are colleagues. She started a volunteer peer tutoring program with students helping students in English, History and challenging STEM courses in the TRiO program and continued this program at the STEM Center. This led to student leader group study sessions for Physics, Calculus, and Chemistry. Collaborating with colleagues at UCR's Bourns College of Engineering brought more tutoring and mentor resources for Norco College STEM students. Empowering these student leaders with sharing their knowledge to aid their peers gave them community service credit and the confidence to undergo formal training as paid tutors and Supplemental Instruction Leaders. Approximately seven years ago she created a STEM Guest Speaker Series which gives community college students an opportunity to hear about cutting edge research from STEM champions and leaders in the STEM community. Speakers share their latest research, career experiences, professional journey, and how their education assisted and inspired them. The series has given students an opportunity to engage with STEM leaders in education and professionals in the industry. She's candid with students in not only asking about their future goals but encouraging them to actively pursue activities that give them leadership and growth experience - her motto is nothing ventured...nothing gained. Her advice to students is to develop relationships with their faculty and network...network...network! [*Vision for Success Goal 3*]

2. Describe the nominees' commitment to high standards of job performance and ways the classified employee exemplifies professionalism. Factors to be considered may include: competency and knowledge on the job to serve a diverse student population; leadership role in employee/management collaboration; promotes collaboration within the work environment; commitment to high standards of performance and professionalism.

Patricia Gill is a first-generation college student and the first in her family to achieve a college degree. She knows from personal experience the challenges students face while trying to pursue their educational journey, which is why she has spent the majority of her career dedicated to working with educational programs that assist first-generation college students succeed and achieve a higher education. She began her career with RCCD in the TRiO programs, working with students who needed support in order to be successful in college. Drawing from her own experiences, Patricia connected with the students and dedicated herself to helping students succeed.

Patricia is the epitome of a professional. She conducts herself in a collegial, collaborative manner that depicts leadership while mentoring other classified professionals. As the STEM Services Developer, she is the lead person for the Title III-HSI Engineering Pathways Grant programs and services and has taken several classified professionals under her wing. She is the liaison to many partnerships utilizing her contacts at UC Riverside, NASA, JPL, NAVSEA, and Loma Linda University Orthotics Prosthetics Department to benefit the program and her students. She is an asset to Norco College.

Patricia always has a friendly smile and sage advice for her colleagues. She has navigated through being a grant funded position for the duration of her career at Norco College and counsels other classified professionals on working in a grant position and how to progress with the grants. She is level headed and has adapted well to the change in the needs of each program or department she has served. That is inspiring to others who want to advance in their careers. She leads by example but is always willing to listen and share advice that is sound.

3. Provide examples of how the nominee demonstrates a commitment to serving the institution's diverse student population through participation in college, professional and/or community activities. Factors to be considered may include: involvement in college and/or district activities; organizes others within the work environment; promotes open communication among work groups; willingness to take the extra step.

Patricia is a member of the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee, the Marketing Committee, and CSEA's Classified Senate. She worked with the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee to lead the Dia De Los Muertos events, educating the college community on this cultural tradition, as well as other diversity activities on campus for the students and staff. She is part of the Racial Justice Taskforce, as part of Chancellor Oakley's call to action, and is collaborating with the Taskforce, Umoja, and the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee on Black History Month, Women's Month and equity events. She is committed to equity and diversity through her program, college activities, and her leadership role on campus.

Early on in her career at RCCD, she served on the executive board of CSEA to help advance the working conditions for classified professionals. She chairs the Social Activities Committee and has led several successful networking, socializing, and celebratory events such as the Ice Cream Social, Winter Pick-Me-Up, Holiday Luncheon, and Classified Professional of the Year Recognition Event. During the pandemic, the committee has reinvented social activities to online catch-ups, holiday fun, and end-of-year activities. These have provided opportunities for classified professionals who are feeling alone and isolated to stay engaged and connected with their peers. Patricia has great organizational skills and knows how to motivate a group while ensuring everyone stays on task. Even though she is busy with her program and the STEM Center, she always makes time to be involved on campus and with her fellow classified professionals.

She has served as a mentor in the Puente program for the last 13 years and has made an impact on many first-generation students' lives. Most of which came from single parent households or were single parents. Please see attached email from a former student/current classified professional who benefited from Patricia's mentorship. [*Vision for Success Goal 5*]

Patricia is the advisor to the STEM Club and has helped guide many students on their path towards a four-year university and careers in STEM. She loves working with students and finds it fulfilling to see them succeed. She mentors others and gives back to the community. Many of her students ask her to write letters of recommendation on their behalf and Patricia happily writes these letters on her own time helping these students get internships, research opportunities, scholarships and transfer to a four-year university.

4. Describe the nominees' commitment to serving as a leader beyond the local institution through service in local, statewide and/or national activities. Provide evidence of activities that reveal leadership through participation in employee organizations, community groups, or participation in state or national organizations. Include acts of service above and beyond the call of duty.

Patricia has volunteered in her community over the years and has demonstrated her belief in giving back. She has devoted her efforts and enthusiasm for charitable events. This is reflected in the below activities.

American Cancer Society: Relay for Life Volunteer - 7 years
Jurupa Valley HS Basketball: Concession Volunteer - 4 years

Chicano Educational Cultural Fund: Raising funds for scholarships for Latino Students - 6 years
Tomas Rivera Teachers Association Advisor - 5 years
Puente Mentor - 13 years
STEM Club Advisor - 4 years
Sunday School Teacher - 8 years
WESTOP Southern California Outstanding New Member Award - October 2010
Norco College EOPS/CARE Staff Champion - June 20

5. Briefly provide any additional reason(s) this nominee should be selected as a 2021 Classified Employee of the Year.

Patricia Gill is known as the STEM Mom. Just ask her students. She cares for them, mentors them, is there for advice, guides them to pursue educational opportunities and even bakes them cookies! The STEM students look up to Patricia and feel that she values, nurtures, and empowers them. Here are some comments from a few of her numerous STEM students:

"Ms. Patricia is so thoughtful, selfless, and loving. She's changes the lives of so many students." said Anfal Jneidi, STEM student. "Thank you, Patricia, for all that you have done! You are truly an inspiration and we truly appreciate the work you do whether it be helping us find internships, learning experiences, projects, etc. You are always on top of it!" shared Bradely Corey, STEM student. "Thank you Ms. Patricia for encouraging me to apply myself and pursue my dream of electrical engineering. I just got accepted to Cal State LA and CSU Long Beach! I couldn't have done it without your support...so it's just as much your victory as it is mine!" shared Abraham Hermosillo, STEM student. "Thank you Ms. Patricia for encouraging me to apply myself and pursue my dream of electrical engineering. I just got accepted to Cal State LA and CSU Long Beach! I couldn't have done it without your support...so it's just as much your victory as it is mine!" shared Abraham Hermosillo, STEM student. "Patricia has been very supportive and never lost faith in us" comment from STEM student.

She takes them on college and industrial tours, assists them with their projects, connects them with internship and research opportunities, and goes above and beyond to help them be successful. Brandon Vivanco, a STEM student, credited Patricia with his success at Norco College and his transferring to Cal Poly Pomona in his video grad story. She has made such an impact on student's lives that her students stay in touch and return as alumni to share their educational experiences, internship and research successes, and professional journeys with current STEM students and mentor them. In student surveys, students mention Patricia. She is committed to her students and is an inspiration to her fellow classified professionals that we can make a difference in student success and transforming students' lives.

EACH LOCAL BOARD OF TRUSTEES MAY FORWARD ONE NOMINEE FROM THEIR DISTRICT IN A DIGITAL OR HARD COPY POSTMARKED BY MARCH 26, 2021 TO:

INFO@CCCCO.EDU

SUBJECT: 2021 CLASSIFIED EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR AWARDS

TO MAIL A HARD COPY SEND MATERIALS TO:

California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office

Attn: Classified Employee Awards Program/BOG

1102 Q Street, 4th Floor

Sacramento, California 95811-6549

* Note: The signature below certifies that the nominee has been endorsed by the local Board of Trustees

Signature of Board of Trustees President

(Print Name)

Name of Community College District

From: Gallegos, Maria de Jesus <MariaDeJesus.Gallegos@rcc.edu>
Sent: Saturday, February 13, 2021 11:24 AM
To: Gill, Patricia <Patricia.Gill@norcocollege.edu>
Subject: Letter Of Recommendation

Dear Patricia,

I hope all is well. I am emailing to request a letter of recommendation for graduate school. The programs I will be applying to are the following: The University of La Verne M.S. Educational Counseling w/ PPS credential concentration in Spanish Bilingual Bicultural Counseling and M.S. Educational Counseling w/PPS credential concentration in Social Justice Higher Education Administration, University of Redlands M.A. School and College Counseling and California State San Bernardino M.S. Counseling and Guidance and M.S. Social Work program for the fall of 2021.

I was fortunate enough to have you as a mentor. You mentored me through all my Norco and undergrad years at UCI. You have been one of the key professionals that I admire, and I hope to be a great one day like you.

After researching many Counseling programs, I chose these three schools because of the school's philosophy to think creatively and challenge the status quo. I remember you encouraged us to challenge our classes' and society's rules, and I believe these programs will make an excellent fit for me after taking your influential Consejos. As a woman who has many roles to juggle, these programs would allow me to grow professionally, intellectually, and grow while balancing my role as a mother.

You were one of the first people at Norco College to help me explore more and exposed me to universities, conferences, and places that I did not know were out there. You saw how my work evolved after I found my purpose to give back to our communities. If it weren't for your encouragement, I would have never accepted to go into UCI. Because of your motivation, I was able to finish my B.A. Since then, I have created a diverse portfolio and grown in confidence. I'm hoping one day I am a mentor like you who can help students through counseling, guide other young people on thinking creatively, produce inspiring works, and become the best version of themselves.

I know you are busy, so I appreciate your time and effort; if you decide to write this letter for me, the letter should be completed on a letterhead no later than March 15, 2021.
Thank you for being such an inspiring mentor, professional, and woman.

Best regards,
Maria Gallegos