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## **Santa Ana College Alumna Nora Mendez to Receive the 2019 California Community College Distinguished Alumni Award**

**(Santa Ana, Calif.)** – Santa Ana College (SAC) alumna Nora Mendez has been selected to receive the prestigious 2019 California Community College Distinguished Alumni Award. Mendez was selected from a pool of nominees from 115 eligible community colleges throughout the state.

Mendez was nominated for the award by the SAC Foundation through its Alumni Relations program and selected based on her:

- Career achievement and professional standing
- Contributions to community
- Number of years of professional excellence and community service
- Service to her community college
- Diverse fields of accomplishment
- Representation of the community college demography

Mendez, who graduated from SAC with an associate's degree in 1999 and from California State University, Fullerton with a bachelor's degree in Human Services in 2001, was inducted into the [SAC Alumni Hall of Fame in 2017](#) for achieving documented distinction and achievement through professional and personal efforts since leaving Santa Ana College.

“Alumni like Nora inspire both our current and future students,” said Christina Romero, executive director, Santa Ana College Foundation. “She represents hundreds of thousands of community college alumni who strive for academic excellence and a pathway to meaningful careers. They better their lives and change the lives of their families and our shared communities. We applaud the Community College League of California for recognizing the tremendous impact that one person can have.”

Over the course of her distinguished 20-year career as a nonprofit executive, Mendez has amassed an impressive list of awards and honors for her dedication to providing extremely low-income families with affordable homes and access to educational opportunities. Among these:

- Orange County Department of Education and City of Santa Ana “Hispanic Woman of the Year” honor
- “Women of Distinction Award” from the California State Assembly (2014)
- 2013 Latin American Citizens Orange County “Hispanic of the Year”
- U.S. House of Representatives Congressional Recognition Award for personal accomplishments and civic involvement.

“Nora is a shining example of paying it forward and making meaningful strides in community service and education,” said Dr. Linda Rose, president, SAC. “We are so proud of her many accomplishments and believe Nora embodies the true spirit of SAC and this prestigious award.”

Mendez currently serves as executive director of OC Community Housing Corporation (OCCHC) and on numerous boards, including The Kennedy Commission, NeighborWorks OC, and Community Housing Resources, Inc.

"As a former resident of OCCHC who has benefited from housing, mentoring and educational services, I can really relate to what our families go through. Our focus is making our housing a transition, not a permanent stop and education is the tool that will help our families get to that next level," said Mendez. "It is with great pride and considerable pleasure that I look forward to OCCHC's future productivity and service for extremely low-income families. My years at SAC taught me that you can achieve your goals if you believe in yourself. Now, my career is helping others believe in themselves."

“The Community College League of California Distinguished Alumni Award recognizes and honors individuals whose attendance at a California community college helped them achieve their educational and professional goals,” said Dr. Larry Galizio, president and CEO, Community College League of California. “Our panel was very impressed with Ms. Mendez’s outstanding achievements and contributions to her community. It is an honor to recognize her as our 2019 recipient.”

The Community College League of California will honor Mendez at its annual convention on Friday, November 22, at the Riverside Convention Center.

### **About Santa Ana College**

Santa Ana College (SAC), which turned 100 years old in 2015, serves about 27,000 students each semester at its main campus in Santa Ana. The college prepares students for transfer to four-year institutions and provides invaluable workforce training and customized training for business and industry. In addition, another 11,000 students are served through the college’s School of Continuing Education located at Centennial Education Center. Ranked as one of the nation’s top two-year colleges awarding associate degrees to Latino and Asian students, the college is also recognized throughout the state for its comprehensive workforce training programs for nurses, firefighters, law enforcement and other medical personnel. SAC is one of two comprehensive colleges under the auspices of the [Rancho Santiago Community College District](#).