



theRPgroup

Research • Planning • Professional Development
for California Community Colleges

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The RP Group Welcomes New Board Members, Honors Departing Members, and Announces Changes to Board Roles

SAN RAFAEL, CA, June 30, 2017 – The RP Group, a research and education-focused non-profit, today announced the results for the 2017-2019 RP Group Board of Directors election. Nominations were submitted earlier this year and new members are decided by member votes.

In addition to welcoming new members and honoring departing members, the RP Group also announced that it has expanded its board by one member and role — the Chair of the Research Advisory Committee to the Executive Committee — for a total of 16 board members for the 2017-2019 year. Congratulations as well to those board members who have changed roles. Please [visit our website](#) for a full list of new and returning Board Members and their updated roles.

New Board Members

Please join us in welcoming three new and one re-elected board members, as follows:

Lijuan Zhai

At Large Member, Northern Region

Director of Institutional Research, Assessment and Planning, Fresno City College

Lijuan has been involved all aspects of institutional research and effectiveness, strategic planning, educational master plan, program review, outcome assessment, enrollment management, and accreditation. She believes institutional research plays a very important role in creating a strong college culture to embed research into college decision-making around the promotion of student success. Her view is that organizational culture can impact the pace and sustainability of organizational development, change, and improvement. Therefore, it is important for leaders to pursue the integration of continuous improvement and quality assurance principles into the management practices of the institution and to establish an organizational culture dedicated to data driven decision making for improving student success.

Lijuan believes the RP Group can play an important role in providing regional training, workshops, or information sharing sessions on planning and seeks to become involved in this area.

Natalia Córdoba-Velásquez

At Large Member, Northern Region

Director, Institutional Research, Hartnell College

Natalia has been in the research world for more than 25 years. She has served as surveyor, coder, data entering, data processing, database developer, research analyst, project manager, consultant, and, recently, as a Director of Institutional Research. She has been part of many campus enterprises that work directly toward students' improvement,

including outreach, Learning Communities, Service Learning Programs, the STEM center, Student Placement, Career Technology Education, job placement, and more. Some of her big contributions have been related to Title III, ACE, NSF, Strong workforce, VTEA grants, and others.

Natalia is enthusiastic and passionate and is very excited to be a part of the RP Group.

James Todd

At-Large Member, Northern Region

Vice President of Student Services, Modesto Junior College

Prior to his role as Vice President of Student Services at Modesto, James served as the Faculty SLO Coordinator and Academic Senate. James also served on the ASCCC Executive Board as an elected faculty representative, serving the Central Valley from Bakersfield to the Oregon border. During this time, he helped provide input on new accreditation standards and led several conference statewide presentations around SLOs, program review, student equity, and the need to disaggregate data in terms of achievement and learning.

James believes in building institutional capacity around data and "democratizing data" across the campus. Research and planning is not a supplement; rather, it must be an integral part of institutional practices: most meetings should include data, analysis, planning, and evaluation. Research and planning should allow us to set aspirational goals and to achieve them in ways that address equity and success through scalable practices.

He is excited to join the RP Group board and continue to be a part of the growing movement to build capacity around data, research, and integrated planning.

Re-Elected Board Member

Lisa Wang

At-Large Member - Southern Region

Senior Research and Planning Analyst, Irvine Valley College

As a current board member of the RP Group, Lisa serves on the Research Advisory Committee to identify opportunities for future research to address the needs of the California Community College system. Her active role with the RP Group includes participation in the Online Education Initiative Steering Committee and more. Representing the RP Group in this capacity, she provides guidance on research-related activities while working with the committee's Equity Work Group to ensure all students have equitable opportunities to succeed in online education.

Lisa notes that, while millions of individuals devote their time to increase student success, institutional research and planning plays the critical role of fostering a culture of inquiry. By encouraging and educating colleagues about the inquiry paradigm, colleges can better identify approaches that most effectively support their students. It is not enough to merely conduct good research; Lisa feels we must engage with our constituencies to share our findings in compelling ways that illuminate the way forward.

Lisa believes it is important for the RP Group to not only produce new, innovative research, but to also ensure dissemination of compelling research findings broadly to the entire California Community College system to increase institutional effectiveness and to improve outcomes for our students. She sees the RP Group better achieving its goal to increase student success by offering more opportunities for professional development to bolster change on a much grander scale.

Departing Board Members

We extend our heartfelt gratitude, appreciation, and respect to departing board members who contributed their time, knowledge, and passion to the mission of improving the lives and success for all community college students in California.

Matthew Wetstein

President 2014-2016, Vice President 2012-2014, At-Large Member 2011-2012

Assistant Superintendent/Vice President of Instruction, San Joaquin Delta College
2016 Aspen Prize Winner

Rick Fillman

Northern California At-Large Member 2013-2017, Co-Chair, RP Awards Committee 2013-2017
Director of Research, City College of San Francisco

Updated Board Roles

- Karen Rothstein: Moving to President Elect
- Bri Hays: Moving to Vice President
- Denice Inciong: Moving to Chair, Professional Development
- Brian Murphy: Moving to Chair, Planning and Policy
- Erik Cooper: Moving to Chair, Research Advisory Committee

About the RP Group

The RP Group is a non-profit, membership-driven organization that strives to build a community college culture that views planning, evidence-based decision-making, and institutional effectiveness as integral, collaborative strategies that work together to promote student success, increase equitable outcomes, improve college operations, and inform policymakers. It does this primarily through research, planning, professional development, evaluation, and technical assistance for California Community Colleges. The RP Group also recognizes excellence through its Lifetime Achievement Award and RP Group Award offerings. Go to www.rpgroup.org for more information.

Mission Statement

Through professional and leadership development, technical assistance, research, and evaluation services, the RP Group strengthens the ability of California Community Colleges to discover and undertake high quality research, planning, and assessments that improve evidence-based decision-making, institutional effectiveness, and success for all students.

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