

COCC Dean of Students Announces Retirement

by Bend Weekly News Sources

Richard Thompson, dean of students and enrollment services and an administrator at Central Oregon Community College (COCC) for the past 22 years, will retire Jan. 1, 2007. However, he will remain connected to the college as he has accepted a position as the coordinator for the Educational Credit Management Corporation (ECMC) Foundation's new outreach effort in Central Oregon.

"It is with mixed emotions that we announce Richard's plans," COCC President James Middleton said. "Personally, I will miss his input and advice on a wide range of issues related to student services. However, I am looking forward to the college's new relationship with ECMC and congratulate Richard on his new position."

Through its nonprofit foundation, ECMC has recently established TheCollegePlace access centers in two communities in Virginia and beginning in January a new one at COCC. The Educational Credit Management Corporation (ECMC) provides a unique range of services to students, schools and lenders participating in the Federal Family Educational Loan Program. The ECMC Foundation is a nonprofit educational foundation affiliated with the ECMC Group, which promotes access to higher education for low-income and first-generation college students.

"This is an extremely exciting opportunity for me," Thompson said. "I hope to be able to help underrepresented students reach their goals by gaining access to college. I chose community college education as my life's work because of its unique role in providing low-income families with affordable education and am pleased to continue working with COCC in this new, extremely valuable effort."

"We are extremely excited about moving into Central Oregon," said Jennifer Wise, president of the ECMC Foundation. "I am thrilled to have someone of Richard Thompson's qualifications and experience heading up our new access center. His many years as financial aid director, as well as serving as dean of students, make him the ideal choice to steer our new college access center, TheCollegePlace, to success."

Middleton said he has not yet begun making plans for replacing Thompson. "I am confident that our

student services staff will maintain quality services during the transition," he said. "After the first of the year, I will work with the college community to find the best long-term leadership for this important area."

TheCollegePlace will provide free-of-charge services to potential students and parents at its center on the COCC campus, at community partnership sites and through its extensive Web resources. TheCollegePlace Central Oregon Center, including the coordinator position, is funded by ECMC. COCC will provide an office location.

TheCollegePlace goals are in the process of being developed to meet the specific needs of the Central Oregon community. The center expects to work with COCC, Oregon State University " Cascades Campus, local public schools and community organizations that support low-income persons to establish service for at least 200 persons in its first six months.

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