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Men of Color conference inspires, educates



More than 40 students, faculty and staff attended the 2022 Men of Color conference.

Engage, empower, elevate – those three words served as major themes of the 2022 Men of Color Conference on March 25.

Held in the Campus Center, the second annual conference drew more than 40 attendees with the goal of connecting students to faculty and staff mentors. It was the first Men of Color conference to be held in-person, as last year's event was conducted remotely via Zoom.

This Men of Color Mentor program was conceived by Sara Gonzales-Tapia, director of EOPS, CARE and CalWORKS; Dr. Nicole Smith, dean of counseling; and Raul Sanchez, EOPS counseling faculty.

Together, they formed the committee with additional members, including Jorge Acosta, Junior Domingo, Ben Macias, La Quirshia Fennell, Rafael Herrera, Dominic Jacquet, Alicia Longyear, Gino Munoz, Dr. Levi Richard and Dr. Gerald Sequeira.

During the three-hour conference, students were introduced to members of the Men of Color Mentor program and speakers, such as adjunct instructor Ms. Fennell and Dr. Greg Schulz, superintendent/president of Citrus College.

Dr. Anthony Contreras, clerk/secretary of the Citrus Community College District Board of Trustees, served as the event's keynote speaker.

A lifelong resident of Azusa and principal of Center Middle School, Trustee Contreras combined inspiration and humor in discussing empowerment and other event themes. He also shared stories about his mentors, upbringing and educational journey that included earning a bachelor's degree (and later a doctorate in education) from the University of Southern California.

Other conference speakers included Dr. Herbert English, vice president of student services at Ohlone College; Eric Vasquez, CEO and founder of Just Us 4 Youth; and Dr. Richard F. Rams, vice president of student services at Citrus College.

Students were also able to hear directly from mentors during a breakout session where panelists shared stories about growth and perseverance.

Ms. Fennell, who also serves as the Black Scholars program counselor and coordinator, said she hopes the event will continue to grow.

"After two years of offering mentoring services in a virtual environment, it felt amazing to reengage our students in person and build community at this conference," Ms. Fennell said. "The mentor program is active year-round, and I hope even more students will take advantage of the incredible resources that it has to offer."

For more details about the mentor program, visit citruscollege.edu/stdntsrvc/moc.



Five students were awarded scholarships at the 2022 Men of Color conference.