



Dr. William Richards President, SUNY Orange

A visionary leader who understands that community colleges are catalysts for economic stability and expansion, as well as creators of educational growth for residents of the areas those colleges serve, Dr. William Richards is now in his 10th year as president of SUNY Orange.

Richards, who arrived at SUNY Orange on Aug. 1, 2003, encourages innovative collaborations and is often fond of saying, “We can do things better together than we can separately.” He has advocated for and formed creative partnerships throughout his career. In nearly all of those instances in which he has facilitated collaborations, he has sought to meet one or more of the following goals: improve the educational program, provide critical experiential learning opportunities to enhance classroom education, facilitate more effective institutional operations to allow the College to “provide more with less,” or contribute to the expansion of educational access and opportunity for local residents.

He’s brought a style of leadership that focuses on three major goals: to enrich lives through learning, enhance economic opportunities in the area the College serves, and to participate in and lead community development. To achieve these goals, Richards believes that the most important resources available are the people he leads. He considers himself the chief cheerleader and supporter of innovation, creativity and risk-taking among all employees.

He has paved the way for the College to establish partnerships with many local businesses and organizations, and his support of collaborations has freed staff and faculty members to pursue creative arrangements with the community as well. He is also a skillful fundraiser who has built beneficial relationships with local businesses, organizations and individuals.

His vision for the College, coupled with his ability to garner wide-ranging support for initiatives at SUNY Orange, has helped secure approximately \$150 million in public-private support for capital projects at the College’s two campuses. These investments, due to be implemented in a six-year span, come at a time when few community colleges are finding resources to upgrade facilities and programs.

Prior to his presidency at SUNY Orange, Dr. Richards spent three years as chief executive officer of the Westminster Campus of Front Range Community College in Denver, Colo. That followed a one-year stint as president of the Higher Education and Advanced Technologies (HEAT) Center, a long-range strategic planning group headquartered in Denver.

From July 1996 through August 1999 Richards was president of Otero Junior College in La Junta Colo, which followed a four-year tour as vice president of Educational Programs and Resources at North Harris College,

Houston, Texas. He was also dean of Arts and Humanities and dean of Developmental Studies during a 10-year stay at the Community College of Denver.

Richards earned a bachelor's degree, graduating magna cum laude, from Regis College in 1966 and a master's degree, with honors, from St. Louis University in 1968. He acquired his Ph.D. in medieval literature from the University of Denver in 1987.

He and his wife Helen are active on many boards and organizations throughout Orange County.