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IEBC Founder Dr. Brad Phillips Honored with RP Group's 2025 Lifetime Achievement Award

LONG BEACH, CA – For more than three decades, the Institute for Evidence-Based Change (IEBC) founder and CEO Dr. Brad Phillips has dedicated his career to advancing student success in higher education, developing various organizations, frameworks, and systems each designed to remove barriers and enhance the student experience. In recognition of his transformative work, Phillips has been awarded the 2025 Lifetime Achievement Award by the Research and Planning Group for California Community Colleges (RP Group).

Each year, the RP Group honors a distinguished leader nearing the culmination of their career for outstanding contributions to institutional research, planning, and effectiveness within California's community colleges. Phillips has long been a leader in these areas, championing data-driven approaches to improve student outcomes.

"Brad is not just an advocate for student success, he's a catalyst for change," Caring Campus Vice President Ken Sherwood said. "His work has transformed the student experience at over 70 community colleges in California and 150 colleges and universities nationwide. It's an honor to work alongside him and support this vital mission."

Phillips has played a pivotal role in shaping the research and planning landscape for community colleges. As a founding Board member of the RP Group in 1992, he helped establish a dedicated research and planning organization for California community colleges. Through these efforts, Phillips created the California Partnership for Achieving Student Success (Cal-PASS) in 1988, the first voluntary data-sharing system connecting K-12 schools, community colleges, and universities.

Building on this legacy, Phillips founded the IEBC in 2011, a nationally recognized nonprofit that empowers educators to use evidence-based data for informed decision-making. In 2018, he launched IEBC's Caring Campus, a framework that equips college and university staff and faculty with actionable strategies and behavioral commitments to boost student persistence, retention, and success rates. Today, two-thirds of California's community colleges have participated in Caring Campus, and the number of colleges and universities adopting the Caring Campus framework continues to expand nationwide.

"Through Caring Campus, Brad has unlocked the potential of staff and faculty to transform the student experience," Caring Campus Associate Vice President Dr. Bola King-Rushing said. "His devotion and passion for this work is contagious, and he continues thinking of ways to expand our offerings and support Caring Campus colleges in this vision every day."

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Beyond his organizational leadership, Phillips has shaped the field through thought leadership and advocacy. He co-authored the book “Creating a Data-Informed Culture in Community Colleges,” has been a keynote speaker at major conferences, and has published numerous articles on student success and institutional effectiveness.

His influence extends to serving as a data facilitator for Achieving the Dream, an advisory board member for the Texas Student Success Center, a member of the California Community Colleges Guided Pathways Advisory Committee, and an ambassador for the Leap of Reason national initiative.

“I am incredibly honored to receive this recognition from the RP Group,” Phillips said. “My life’s work has been about leveraging research and innovation to improve student success. This award is a testament to the power of data-driven change in education, and I look forward to seeing how this work continues to grow and thrive in the future.”

PHOTO CAPTIONS:

IEBC_PHILLIPS1: Caring Campus founder and CEO Dr. Brad Phillips’ work in advancing student success in higher education has earned him the 2025 Lifetime Achievement Award by the Research and Planning Group for California Community Colleges.

IEBC_PHILLIPS2: In 2018, Dr. Brad Phillips launched IEBC’s Caring Campus, a framework that equips college and university staff and faculty with actionable strategies and behavioral commitments to boost student persistence, retention, and success rates.

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