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## **Five Caring Campuses Showcase Dedication to Students by Earning Caring Campus Certification**

**LONG BEACH, CA** – Five colleges and universities have become the first in the nation to earn Caring Campus Certification, a recognition that highlights their efforts to foster a campus culture centered on connection, compassion, and support for all students.

Caring Campus Certification honors institutions that go beyond simple implementation, taking intentional steps to embed Caring Campus practices into the fabric of their campus operations and culture. Data shows that when students feel cared for and connected, they persevere and succeed at higher rates. Hartnell College in Salinas, Calif., Ranger College in Ranger, Texas, and Mission College in Santa Clara, Calif., each earned silver certification, while Texas A&M University - Kingsville in Kingsville, Texas, and Los Angeles Pierce College in Woodland Hills, Calif., were awarded bronze certification.

“We have seen Caring Campus make a powerful impact on our culture, in the way that we think, and how we approach our students and each other,” Ranger College President Derrick Worrels said. “Receiving silver certification tells us that we’re doing things the right way and moving in the right direction to create a caring culture at Ranger – which is our ultimate goal.”

Ranger College staff and faculty go above and beyond to ensure all students feel supported and cared for on campus. Through their Random Acts of Kindness initiative, the college recognizes and celebrates students, staff, and faculty who go out of their way to help others. Among the recent acts recognized was a faculty member’s effort to connect with a student at their campus job, providing personalized encouragement and support for an academic program application.

Additionally, small changes to signage and terms on campus, such as switching “Student Office Hours” to “Student Help Hours,” help create an environment where students know they are seen and supported.

“The amazing part is that Caring Campus has really overflowed into our students as well,” Worrels said. “We hear stories of students calling to check in on their professors – just like our faculty and staff strive to do for students. That says everything.”

Hartnell College President Michael Gutierrez brought Caring Campus to Hartnell after seeing its success at his previous institution, Sacramento City College. Now, Hartnell staff strive to bring their “Caring Panthers” commitments and strategies to their everyday interactions.

Through hosting welcome tables with snacks, information, and staff members available to walk students to destinations on campus, Hartnell ensures students feel welcomed from day one. Branded Caring Panthers T-shirts and nametags also help ensure staff are identifiable to students who need assistance.

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"I want to give all the credit for this silver certification to our classified professionals for being the driving force behind this," Gutierrez said. "The recognition not only honors all the work they've been doing, but verifies that Caring Panthers is here to stay."

Both Hartnell and Ranger colleges have institutionalized Caring Campus in their hiring processes, ensuring new employees are aligned with the college's culture of care. Both campuses have also seen constant enrollment growth over the past years, which both presidents attribute in part to the caring atmosphere on campus.

"Creating a culture where students feel welcomed is critical, especially for community college students who don't always feel connected to their college," Gutierrez said. "Committing your college to Caring Campus creates the opportunity to invite students to be part of a community."

Colleges and universities that are part of the Caring Campus Network can [apply for certification](#) free of charge through Saturday, May 31. Certified campuses will also be recognized at the inaugural Caring Campus Conference 2025: Building a National Culture of Care, taking place Nov. 12–14 in San Diego.

"Our first five certified Caring Campus institutions have truly embraced the idea that student success is best achieved when colleges make connection and care a campus-wide priority," Caring Campus CEO and founder Dr. Brad Phillips said. "Congratulations to you all on this incredible achievement, and thank you for your commitment to your students!"

#### PHOTO CAPTIONS:

**IEBC\_CERTIFICATION1:** Hartnell College received Caring Campus silver certification, marking them as an institution that strives to bring their "Caring Panthers" commitments and strategies to everyday interactions.

**IEBC\_CERTIFICATION2:** Ranger College is one of five higher education institutions to receive Caring Campus Certification, honoring them for taking intentional steps to embed Caring Campus practices into the fabric of their campus operations and culture.

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