



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**California Council on Teacher Education Announces Inaugural JEDI Awards
Honoring Equity-Driven Leadership, Scholarship, and Community Engagement**

The California Council on Teacher Education (CCTE) is proud to announce the recipients of its inaugural Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (JEDI) Awards, recognizing outstanding individuals and programs across California whose work advances racial justice, equity, and inclusion in teacher education.

For the first time, the CCTE JEDI Committee introduced three distinct award categories to honor excellence in leadership, scholarship, and community-grounded practice. This year's awards process drew 23 nominations representing a wide range of impactful efforts across the state.

Award for Critical Leadership in Teacher Education

Dr. Bre Evans-Santiago (CSU-LB) was recognized for her transformative leadership in redesigning admissions processes to reduce bias and for founding the Black Educator Teacher Residency. Her work has significantly expanded access and representation for Black educators, modeling how systems can be reimaged to create more equitable pathways into the profession.

The **Berkeley Teacher Education Program (BTEP)**, nominated by Dr. Sonal Patel, was also honored in this category for its comprehensive, justice-centered program redesign. BTEP's efforts to align admissions, curriculum, and partnerships with equity goals have strengthened the diversity of the teacher pipeline and deepened candidates' preparation for justice-oriented teaching.

Award for Critical Research, Scholarship, and Creative Activities in Teacher Education

Dr. Josephine Pham (UCSC) was recognized for her groundbreaking scholarship through the Mai Pedagogy Project, which uses storytelling and the arts to bring research on racial justice and teacher activism to life. Her work expands how educators engage with scholarship and positions them as active agents of change.

Award for Transformative Community-Grounded Work in Teacher Education

Dr. Melissa Navarro Martell (SDSU), nominated by Dr. Saúl Maldonado and colleagues, was honored for her sustained commitment to community-engaged teacher education in bilingual contexts. Her work centers authentic partnerships and elevates communities as co-educators in preparing future teachers.

The **Los Angeles Urban Teacher Residency (LAUTR)** program, nominated by Dr. Leila Ricci and colleagues, was also recognized for its deep and sustained collaboration with community-based organizations. LAUTR's model emphasizes community cultural wealth, language practices, and local histories, ensuring that teacher preparation is rooted in the strengths of the communities it serves.

Advancing Equity Through Collective Action

"These inaugural JEDI Awards reflect the powerful, equity-centered work happening across California's educator preparation landscape," said CCTE JEDI Committee Chair, Professor Daniel Soodjinda. "Each awardee demonstrates what is possible when we challenge inequitable systems, elevate community voice, and prepare educators to lead with justice at the center."



CCTE remains committed to advancing policies and practices that support equitable, inclusive, and high-quality teacher preparation. The organization celebrates this year's awardees as exemplars of the transformative change needed in education today.

About the California Council on Teacher Education (CCTE)

CCTE is a statewide organization dedicated to advancing excellence and equity in educator preparation through advocacy, collaboration, and innovation.

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