

“Spotlighting Our Success” Faculty/Staff Award

We nominate Maria Rodriguez, better known as “Carmen”, Counselor in EOP&S/CARE for the *Excellence* award.

Maria Rodriguez is a tireless, dedicated and giving educational counselor. “Miss Carmen” as the students address her, definitely practices her belief about her position at Valley College; we often hear her proclaim *“It’s all for the students”*. Maria probably doesn’t have enough time in a given day to do it all, as the ALL is for the students; and they care about “Miss Carmen”. Carmen is committed to the students becoming responsible individuals first, as they ultimately attain their educational goals.

Maria Rodriguez serves and shares on numerous committees, Financial Aid Appeals, Commencement and finds time for the District Assembly and the Joe Baca Foundation..

Ms. Rodriguez is very committed to her Campus wide involvement and her innovative talents serves well as advisor to several school organizations/clubs, and in this capacity the club managers and students are learning our college rules, regulations and to understand their allegiance, as they go about their commitment and club functions. The *Valley College Cheerleaders* appreciate “Miss Carmen’s” belief in them, but really love her upbeat personality as she cheers for them. One year ago Carmen Rodriguez help to birth a new club known as *Voices of Success*. In a very short time, *Voices of Success* had numerous Opportunity Drawings to raise money to help students with transportation services, gas cards, book assistance, and school supplies. This club has saved money and now has established their first *Voices of Success* Scholarship in the amount of \$300.00. A very fitting motto: Striving for greatness by letting our voices be heard loud and clear everywhere; that motto definitely is in line with the motto of their advisor Maria Rodriguez *“It’s all for the students”*. Two years ago, Maria was very instrumental in the Award Winning Valley Bound Commitment program. She helped to recruit the schools and students, and got to know them by first name as she interacted with them in their *Student Development* classroom and in the capacity as their personal Counselor. Ms. Rodriguez definitely helped to create Valley Bound students’ opportunity of learning. On November 20th, SBVC's Valley-Bound Commitment was honored as the unanimous recipient of the California Community Colleges 2010 Chancellor's Student Success Award.

EOP&S Staff is very proud of Maria, “Miss Carmen” Rodriguez and we know she deserves recognition. We eagerly nominate her for the *Excellence* Award.

Sincerely,

EOP&S/CARE Staff

March 15, 2011

Dear Spotlighting Our Success Committee,

I would like to **nominate Maria del Carmen Rodriguez, EOP&S/CARE Counselor, for the Excellence Award**. Being that the award recognizes one's "outstanding performance and commitment" while showing excellence in "improving campus life," she is an ideal candidate.

Carmen is compassionate, empathetic, and duly loved by her students. Her personality and caring nature extends well beyond the confines of the job responsibilities spelled out in her contract.

One simply must witness the opportunity to walk across the campus with her as students seek her out to say hello while she greets them all by name. She leads with the heart and provides the real-life connection point with the school that is so critical for students to achieve success in college.

This approach has not only guided EOP&S/CARE students towards their educational goals, but has been an ideal skill set to serving as a counselor to the award-winning Valley-Bound Commitment Program.

Over the last few years (including in 2010-2011) she has served as the living, breathing heart of the program and coordinated efforts to identify Valley-Bound Commitment students who:

- Shared their stories with the local media
- Agreed to be photographed for marketing materials
- Appeared in a promotional video, newsletters, board reports, press releases, annual reports and more
- Volunteered at special events with professional decorum

In addition, Carmen serves on multiple committees and as a student club advisor for the Cheerleading Club.

As you can see, she really cares about her students and their future, and the numbers don't lie.

Due in part to the solid one-to-one connections in the classroom and the counseling office, the statistics show that Valley-Bound Commitment students are succeeding at a rate that is greater than the general SBVC student population. Higher grade point averages and retention/persistence rates have been seen in each of the Valley-Bound Commitment cohort classes since 2008.

In November 2010, the California Community College State Chancellor's Office named the Valley-Bound Commitment as the top student success program in all of California. It is my belief that this prestigious award would not have been possible without the day-in/day-out commitment on the individual student level by Carmen Rodriguez and the Valley-Bound Commitment team.

Thanks for considering this nomination,

Craig Petinak, Director
Office of Marketing & Public Relations
San Bernardino Valley College