

Dr. Cynthia Olivo Bio

Dr. Cynthia Olivo has been a professional in higher education since 1995. For the past 24 years she has served in capacities including Dean, Associate Vice President & Vice President. This is her 17th year as an administrator including seven years at the university level and 10 years in community college.

Dr. Olivo is the Vice President of Student Services at Pasadena City College (PCC), serving 27,000 diverse students including 51% Latinx, 27% Asian & Pacific Islander, 4% African American, 15% White and 48% first generation college students with 80% meeting low income guidelines. Her leadership qualities include leading innovation to improve student success, consensus building among stakeholder groups to advance student equity and creating an engaging, inclusive environment to foster change in our practices while emphasizing cultural competence of practitioners to meet student needs. Initiatives include creating a large scale Pathways Program, PCC Complete Graduation Initiative, Student Equity Professional Development program to transform teaching, hiring, and services to students. These efforts have resulted in PCC earning distinctions such as “Top 10 Community College in the Nation” by the Aspen Prize for College Excellence; Top 10 Best for Vets in the USA by Military Times Magazine; Champion in Higher Education for being a top producer of Associate Degree for Transfers in California by the Campaign for College Opportunity. Cynthia was selected for the Aspen Presidential Fellows Program Class of 2017, completed the Harvard Institute for Management & Leadership in Education and the American Council on Education Advancing to the Presidency Program. Dr. Olivo currently leads a team that has secured \$17 million dollars in grants. She led the creation of a Veterans Resource Center and the LancerPantry and is leading the following projects: Integrated One Stop Student Services Center, Safe Zone Center, Foster Youth Center, expansion of the Pathways Center and Veterans Resource Center and is providing strategic vision in creating a first of its kind Career & Completion Center and the Center for Student Equity and Professional Development. She is the President-Elect for the Statewide Chief Student Services Officers of California Community Colleges and is the Southern California Representative organizing a Statewide Latinx California Community College Organization. Dr. Olivo is an adjunct faculty at the University of Southern California Rossier School of Education Doctoral Program teaching Administration in Higher Education.

Cynthia earned her BA in Psychology and a Master of Science in Counseling from California State University San Bernardino. She earned her Ph.D. in Education with an emphasis in Urban Leadership from Claremont Graduate University in 2009. Dr. Olivo is the granddaughter of incredible migrant farmworkers. She is the daughter of an amazing single mom who raised four daughters who all went to college and graduated. Her Mom who graduated with her BA at the age of 50. Cynthia is the first in her family to go to college and third generation Mexican-American/Chicana.