



**For Immediate Release**

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**Rochelle Smarr, Director of Department of Service Learning and Civic Engagement, California State University, San Marcos Named LEAD California's 2022 Richard E. Cone Award for Emerging Leaders Recipient**

*California State University, San Marcos' Rochelle Smarr, Director of the Department of Service Learning and Civic Engagement, recognized for her impact on service-learning and community-campus partnerships throughout the San Marcos area.*

March 8, 2022

**Hayward, CA** – LEAD California has selected Rochelle Smarr as the recipient of the LEAD California 2022 Richard E. Cone Award for Emerging Leaders in Community Engagement.

In 1999, LEAD California (formerly California Campus Compact) developed the Richard E. Cone Award for Excellence & Leadership in Cultivating Community Partnerships in Higher Education. Since then, the award has been bestowed annually upon an individual who has made significant contributions to the development of partnerships between institutions of higher education and communities – partnerships through which student learning and the quality of life in communities are simultaneously improved. This year, the Richard E. Cone Award recognizes an exemplary early-career individual who is an emerging leader in the field of community engagement, whose work has had a positive impact on campus and in the community, and who is guided by the best practices of community-campus partnerships. It is the hope of LEAD California that this award will inspire all higher education institutions to consider ways to deepen their efforts to institutionalize and sustain authentic community-campus partnerships.

“Rochelle is so deserving of this award. In addition to the great work that she is doing, Rochelle’s commitment to building authentic relationships and leading with integrity, are qualities that this award celebrates,” said Dr. Elaine Ikeda, Executive Director of LEAD California. “She is the kind of professional and person that Richard “Dick” Cone (who passed away in 2020) would have wanted recognized and honored.”

Rochelle holds a Bachelor of Arts in English (2008) from San Jose State University (SJSU) and a Master of Arts in Educational Leadership Politics and Advocacy (2012) from New York University (NYC). She is currently an Educational Studies candidate at U.C. San Diego and California State University, San Marcos (CSUSM), and is expected to receive her doctorate in 2024. Her role at CSUSM involves oversight and administration of all civic engagement programs and service-learning courses for the campus. Prior to CSUSM, she has had community organizing experience in New York, Chicago, and Philadelphia and held community engagement leadership roles since 2015 at the City College of New York, Cornell University and the University of Pennsylvania.

Drs. Carol Cujec and Dawn Formo, CSU San Marcos wrote, “Without question, Ms. Smarr is an emerging leader who has made a significant impact on community engagement at the local, national, and even international level. Her selfless dedication to advancing the causes of service learning and civic engagement deserves to be celebrated. We look forward to seeing her influence and impact grow in the years to come.”

Destinee Taylor, her former student assistant, spoke about Rochelle's leadership by sharing that "the most valuable lesson I learned from Rochelle that I think is important to pass on to others when I'm given the chance, is to practice leadership that is servant-based, authentic and transformational. If we're meant to contribute our efforts toward positive outcomes in our society, why not identify issues in the world that we care about and seek to improve upon them? That's exactly what Rochelle does as the Director of Service Learning and Civic Engagement."

Dr. Scott Meyers-Lipton, mentor and professor at San Jose State University shared that, "[Rochelle's] work makes her one of the best minds and practitioners of civic-engaged learning in the nation, among this next generation."

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#### ABOUT THE RICHARD E. CONE AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE AND LEADERSHIP IN CULTIVATING COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Dr. Richard E. Cone was a voice in the national dialogue on experiential education, civic engagement and service-learning since the 1970s, and was a guiding spirit and mentor in the development and evolution of LEAD California (formerly California Campus Compact) since its beginnings more than 30 years ago. For 25 years, he directed the much-lauded Joint Educational Project (JEP) at the University of Southern California from which he retired in 2002. In 1999, LEAD California presented Dr. Cone with the first Richard E. Cone Award for Excellence & Leadership in Cultivating Community Partnerships in Higher Education. Since then, the award was bestowed annually upon an individual who has made significant contributions to the development of partnerships between institutions of higher education and communities – partnerships through which student learning and the quality of life in communities are simultaneously improved.

In 2017, LEAD California renamed the award the Richard E. Cone Award for Emerging Leaders for Community Engagement. This biannual award recognizes an exemplary early-career individual who is an emerging leader in the field of community engagement, whose work has had a positive impact on campus and in the community, and who is guided by the best practices of community-campus partnerships. For more information on the Richard E. Cone Award and to see a list of past honorees, please visit [www.leadcalifornia.org/](http://www.leadcalifornia.org/)

#### ABOUT LEAD CALIFORNIA

LEAD California is a statewide nonprofit membership organization supporting half a million university and college students, administrators, faculty, staff, and community members who, with our resources, expertise, training, and connections, are creating innovative ways to ensure a healthy, just, and democratic society. [www.leadcalifornia.org](http://www.leadcalifornia.org)