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Contact:
Tere Fluegeman
SOCCCD Public Affairs, 949.582.4920

SOCCCD Wins National Technology Innovation Award

July 26, 2012 – South Orange County Community College District (SOCCCD) was recognized as a “Model of Technology Innovation on Campus” by Campus Technology magazine last week at the 19th annual Campus Technology conference in Boston. Ten institutions received the 2012 Innovators Awards from more than 350 entries and SOCCCD was honored along with Stanford University, Purdue University and others.

SOCCCD was selected for its Sherpa software project, inspired by the Sherpa mountaineers of Nepal, whose assistance enables climbers to summit the world’s tallest peaks. Sherpa is a recommendation engine similar to those used by Netflix and Amazon; however, instead of recommending movies or books, Sherpa recommends courses and student services and offers personalized announcements, To-Do lists, and calendars to students. Sherpa’s recommendations (called “Nudges”) can also be delivered via emails, text messages, or automated phone calls—and will soon be available via a custom-created application for mobile phones and tablets such as Apple’s iPad.

“Increasing college completion is a major initiative across the U.S. Our goal is to develop real-time technology tools to guide students on an efficient, successful path toward completion. This award is an honor and a validation of our team’s efforts,” said Dr. Robert Bramucci, vice chancellor of technology and learning services at SOCCCD. Sherpa is guided by a collaborative team of students, faculty, staff and administrators from SOCCCD’s two colleges—Saddleback College in Mission Viejo, CA, and Irvine Valley College in Irvine, CA.

A digital version of the magazine’s July 2012 issue, which includes a cover story about the winners, can be viewed at http://campustechnology.com/research/2012/07/digital-edition_july.aspx.

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