

DR. FRANK CHONG USES BOTTOM-UP, TOP-DOWN APPROACH TO BUILD CAPACITY FOR ATE GRANTS FOR ATE GRANTS

With more than 30 years of community college leadership experience, Dr. Frank Chong, president emeritus, sees himself as a resource for CCPI-STEM and the community colleges in Northern California, Hawaii and the other Pacific Islands that he is in contact with as chair of the Pacific Regional Network.

"I hope that my network and my contacts will enable me to reach out to current leaders in community colleges ... to help get the word out and trumpet the great work and potential [of ATE grants]," he said.

Chong retired in July as the president and superintendent of Santa Rosa Junior College in California. During the Obama administration, he worked at the U.S. Department of Education as deputy assistant secretary for community colleges.

Based on his conversations with community college leaders at conferences, like the National Asian Pacific Islander Council (NAIPIC) meeting that he attended in fall 2023, and through phone calls and virtual meetings, Chong has found that lack of institutional capacity is the biggest impediment to community colleges submitting ATE grant proposals.

"It's not so much too much work for too little money, it's more like 'Where do I put this?' Right? ... grant development offices are one or two-person shops or not even existent. That work gets distributed to instructional deans and student services deans to write their own grants. So a lot of it is capacity building," he said.

For new presidents, as well as the presidents of small colleges and other colleges that don't have a culture of acquiring federal grants, Chong points to the mentoring offered by various ATE projects. He explains to them that the various mentoring programs are "trying to level the playing field by making these grant opportunities more user friendly and more accessible."

Because of the enormous turnover among college presidents, Chong has another target audience for his CCPI-STEM outreach: trustees.

"Many trustees are very much interested and involved with workforce issues in their communities and so it's important for us to lay groundwork to educate trustees, senior leadership. And, hopefully that will cascade down to the dean and the faculty level, because the faculty are really important. It's a kind of bottom-up, top-down approach to really get institutions prepared and ready to apply for ATE grants," he said.

Recognizing that community college leaders know more about employers in their service areas, Chong says he encourages presidents to partner with industry on ATE proposals but does not make specific recommendations.

He also makes presidents aware that they can partner with four-year institutions on collaborative proposals.

"We emphasize the importance of having those types of partnerships," he said.



Dr. Frank Chong used the autumn meeting of National Asian Pacific Islander Council (NAIPIC) to talk about CCPI-STEM and ATE grants with leaders of Pacific Island community colleges.

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