

I Love My  
Librarian!  
2011 Award

**NOMINATIONS FOR  
Dr. Rhonda Allison Rios  
Kravitz**

Dean, Learning Resources Division  
Sacramento City College  
Sacramento, California

**NOMINATED BY**

Victoria Henderson  
Lorena V. Marquez  
Nicole Woolley

Sacramento, California

**1. Please tell us in 2-3 sentences why your nominee should win this award. What sets him/her apart?**

Dr. Rhonda Rios Kravitz, Dean of the Learning Resource Center, embodies all that librarians strive to be: service-oriented, student-centered, open-minded and balanced in her communication and treatment of every patron who walks in the door and every staff member she works with and supervises. Her enthusiasm for librarianship shines in her support of all of those working in the profession and those who wish to enter the profession. She encourages everyone she encounters to do their best and she constantly provides the support system to make that possible. Those of us who are fortunate to work with her are better librarians because of her.

Rhonda has broadened the definitions of knowledge by creating open and inviting spaces for student-center programs, public art, and diverse speakers. Her progressive, forward-thinking leadership honors both humanitarian values and innovative technology, constantly guiding our library towards excellence in service and scholarship. She is a mentor and friend to many, and she opens educational and professional doors to all. She always comes out from her office to participate in the living culture of our campus and is a dynamo of energy, creativity, and dedication. Her very presence on campus makes us a better college.

**2. Please discuss how the nominee has helped you and/or others and made your experience of the library a more positive one. For instance, did the nominee assist you in a research project or enhance your students' learning experience?**

Dr. Rios Kravitz always has the students' and faculty needs at the core of her decisions when managing resources in the library. She ensures that all our students, from a variety of cultural and educational backgrounds, know that the library is a space that honors them as scholars and learners. As Dr. Lorena Marquez, another nominator, stated:

"I have had the great pleasure of working with Dr. Rios-Kravitz for approximately 16 years. She is an amazing librarian, leader, and organizer. I admire and respect her as an individual and campus organizer.

Rhonda does not fit the librarian norm. I met her while I was an undergraduate student at Sacramento State University in 1996. As a student leader I knew I could always count on her for support. She attended our events and allowed us to post flyers in and around the library on the student bulletin boards. Dr. Rios-Kravitz had an open door policy that was always inviting and was always in a good positive mood that was contagious. I continued with my studies and received a MA in History at Sacramento State while she worked there, and she offered her wealth of knowledge exposing me to fundamentally important primary source materials. If ever I were stumped, she was there to help me through. I should add that she personally introduced me to the staff in the campus archives as well as the microfilm/video room. She made the process so much easier and manageable.

I went on to earn a PhD in History at University of California, San Diego and when I returned to Sacramento to conduct primary research for my dissertation again, she was there to assist and support me. I have visited many archives and libraries throughout my years as a researcher, and never have I met such a bubbly, enthusiastic, and caring librarian as Dr. Rios-Kravitz.

Today, I am an adjunct instructor at Sacramento City College (where Dr. Rios-Kravitz currently works) and I must admit that had she not insisted that I personally meet the Dean in the Department of Behavioral and Social Sciences, I probably would not be employed. She encouraged me the entire way and believed in me as a scholar and professor.

As it might be evident by now, I am completely in awe of Dr. Rios-Kravitz. She has single-handedly transformed her position into one of importance through her work as a change-agent. She believes in her students. She has contributed to my academic and professional success and I thank her for making a difference in my life."

Voices of Hope, a student club dedicated to giving voice to students with disabilities, awarded Dr. Rios Kravitz their top honor last May, “The Someone You Should Know Award.” As the award states, it was given to her “for all your diligent efforts and labors of love on behalf of the Disabled Student Body at Sacramento City College. Thank you for encouraging us to soar to greater heights. May you feel as regal as you make us feel!”

In addition to her ongoing support of this club, Dr. Rios Kravitz suggested and helped make possible a library exhibit that showcased the talents, struggles, and barriers disabled students face every day on campus. The Spring 2011 display was also translated into Braille. Oral histories were collected for the exhibit and when the exhibit ended, they were placed in the campus archives for continued use. This exhibit received high acclaim from users throughout the campus and the community.

As a librarian working in an urban community college, she is always advocating for library policies that will enable students to succeed. She was instrumental in helping to create humane fine policies that recognized the hardships that many urban inner city youth face on an everyday basis. As one student stated, “you have made my ability to continue in college not only doable, but also made me aware of how interconnected I am to the college and all its students. You made me aware of my responsibility to be a ‘respected library user’ turning in books on time, and caring for others success as well as my own self.”

It is not uncommon to find students in her office, bouncing ideas off her for research papers. She is a trusted administrator and librarian on campus that students look to her for guidance, support, and help in finding success on the campus, particularly, first generation, low-income students of color. Rhonda, as a first-generation student and woman of color herself, has tremendous empathy and cares for all persons. Her mentorship, commitment to others, and influence have made students think about librarianship as a career, many who never before gave it a thought or envisioned it as a profession worth pursuing.

### **3. How does the nominee make the college, community college, or university a better place?**

Dr. Rios Kravitz has filled the Learning Resource Center (LRC) with student art and science projects, such as the science and engineering clubs award winning boat built from paper that was actually floated with a person inside it. Her goal is to continue to bring students, faculty, and the community into the LRC to discover the talented faculty, staff employed by the LRC and the rich resources housed in its collections, as well as to celebrate the great talent of Sacramento City College’s (SCC) students.

Her latest research project involved working with the Summer Success Academy (SSA), a summer bridge program for newly entering first year students just graduated from high school. She worked with an interdisciplinary group of campus faculty and staff to develop a survey examining the barriers and enhancers to their success. She held focus group sessions in the Learning Resource Center with the students and will follow their progress throughout the semester. These activities will be expanded to other student groups including EOPS, and RISE (students on probation) to enhance the success of SCC's students.

She is always bringing students into the Learning Resource Center, which houses the Library, the Tutoring and Writing Centers, Instructional Media, and Distance Education. Last year she displayed the projects created by the SSA in the library. The exhibit was called "Welcome to my Global Hood" and showcased ransom notes by the students, essays designed to show what was holding them hostage as well as collages depicting their values and visions. Many SCC classes came to visit this powerful exhibit and it was used a learning tool for other students.

Rhonda is known on campus as a librarian and educator who excels at communication, has a passion for teaching, and cares about students. She inculcates and strengthens students' abilities to become critical thinkers through the different types of activities she involves herself on campus and in the library, e.g. her teaching, work with student organizations, creative programming offerings, and research. She continuously makes learning relevant to students by establishing positive connections to their lives. Dr. Rios Kravitz builds communities with students, faculty, staff, and administrators to identify student needs and to develop innovative programs to meet those needs.

One of the teaching faculty at the campus Dr. Gunderson stated, "As a dean and a librarian, she is the most dedicated, enlightened, and progressive administrator and mentor on our campus. Her love and commitment to our 23,000 students is unparalleled. She firmly believes access to a quality higher education is a right for all of our students and she fights hard to create equity where it does not exist, accountability where it is lacking, and social justice for our students – especially to our disenfranchised groups. Dean Rios Kravitz does not demand any less of herself than what she asks of us. Her commitment and energy are contagious and she makes you want to do better and to be a better educator. She is one of the best people I know and I consider it an honor to be her colleague and her friend. Educators do not get any better! "

Dr. Rios Kravitz holds a high bar for herself and her work ethic is unmatched. Her work is exemplary and she brings innovation, a team-spirit, and consistent follow-through to every college-wide project she undertakes. She represents the college with distinction in professional and community activities and has outstanding problem-solving skills/abilities. She is known for demonstrating sensitivity and amazing creativity on difficult issues that can rise to a crisis situation in a flash, e.g., diffusing a student campus demonstration by Chicano/Latino students who had felt

the campus newspaper had stereotyped and insensitively portrayed their commitment to change, equity, and social justice. Her ability to diffuse difficult situations is unparalleled on campus and she was immediately called upon by the college administrators to address the situation.

#### **4. How has the library, and the nominee in particular, had an impact on students and faculty and the teaching and learning process?**

Rhonda is well known for her commitment to students and faculty. Rhonda has served as an advisor to several student groups, including the SCC DREAM Caucus (undocumented students) where she has assisted students with locating scholarships, finding scholarly resources, and writing college essays for transferring to 4-year colleges. Her vision for the students' has helped them to become impassioned advocates for public policies that directly affect their lives. The Dream Caucus has worked with legislators regarding legislation that would help students become eligible for state scholarships. Oftentimes feeling extremely marginalized, these students now have been given the skills to feel knowledgeable, confident, and able to build strong networking relationships with faculty, community and government organizations.

She advocated for and helped to design the first Chicano/Latino graduation ceremony at SCC. This ceremony celebrated and highlighted the educational accomplishments, cultura, comunidad, and familia for the campuses Chicano/Latino students. The ceremony was expanded to include the four campuses of the Los Rios Community College District of which SCC is one. Now in its fourth year, students have returned to the graduation ceremony to watch siblings and friends graduate and to help mentor other students seeking to transfer to 4-year college.

Rhonda always has the students' needs at the core of her decision when managing resources in the library. She ensures that all our students from a variety of cultural and educational backgrounds are met with a warm and comfortable environment. As a librarian faculty member Nicole Woolley stated, "She is often called upon to make tough choice and her first priority is to ensure student success. It is a testament to her commitment that past students regularly make time in their busy schedules to stop at her office to update her on the educational progress, and to thank her for the support and guidance she gave them along the way."

The Lead Library Media Technical Assistant wrote, "Rhonda is extraordinary as the Dean. Her primary focus is always on how she can help students succeed in their college endeavors. The students at Sacramento City College are drawn to her like a magnet because of her giving and helpful personality. She never hesitates to help anyone in need and is always there to listen. Rhonda truly exemplifies the ideal that the students come first at Sacramento City College."

Rhonda is often invited to speak in classes at SCC and the other surrounding colleges. She will be featured in a panel at Drexel on librarianship as a career choice at the end of the month.

Rhonda has been instrumental in setting up a partnership with the Yolo County Library to offer limited services to students attending the West Sacramento Outreach Center, a part of Sacramento City College. She is also currently negotiating with the University of California Davis, library to establish limited services for the Davis Outreach Center which will open in 2012. The two outreach centers serve over 8,000 students.

Rhonda also oversees the campus Cultural Awareness Center and works closely with the faculty coordinator of the Center to bring in programs and speakers that enhance the campus curriculum and celebrate the campus' commitment to diversity. Two years ago, a special exhibit was negotiated with the Anne Frank museum in New York and a holocaust speaker was featured. The exhibit and lecture were open to all members of the campus and the external community. This event was seen as a premier event offered by the college.

Her knowledge of diversity issues and commitment to equity has made her a featured speaker throughout the region and she was asked to help organize the first Community College Equity conference held at Sacramento City College several years ago.

Rhonda works with a number of academic organizations, including the National Association for Chicana and Chicano Studies (NACCS). She has headed this organization and is now the National Treasurer. She is active in the Sacramento Chapter of the Association for Raza Educators. This group meets in her library once a month and she is working on the education subcommittee. This committee will present a report on the status of Chicano/Latino students in the Sacramento community to the school board. Rhonda is one of the authors of the public policy paper being presented. Rhonda is also a past president of REFORMA, the National Association to Promote Library and Information Services to Latinos and the Spanish-Speaking. She recently worked with Drexel in establishing a new REFORMA chapter in Sacramento and helped to establish scholarships dedicated to Latinos interested in pursuing a master's degree in library science.

## 5. How has the individual demonstrated leadership in the campus community?

Dr. Rios Kravitz is extremely active in the campus community where her influence and presence are felt in numerous ways. She serves on many campus committees, many devoted to enhancing student success, including the Student Equity Committee, and Staff Equity Committee, the Learning Resources Standing Committee, Basic Skills Committee, the Enrollment Management Committee, the Chicano/Latino Faculty and Staff Association, and the Academic and Student Deans Councils. Her work has been impactful in three areas: strengthening student success, improving support for faculty teaching and scholarly innovation, and expanding relationships with the external community.

On all these committees she has been a strong voice for ensuring that students feel respected, and honored. If there is an initiative to help students succeed, there is a good chance Rhonda is involved. In her work she constantly speaks to all about the library and LRC as place, a place for innovation, networking, scholarly research, and place to explore.

One of the teaching faculty at the campus Dr. Gunderson stated, “As a dean and a librarian, she is the most dedicated, enlightened, and progressive administrator and mentor on our campus. Her love and commitment to our 23,000 students is unparalleled. She firmly believes access to a quality higher education is a right for all of our students and she fights hard to create equity where it does not exist, accountability where it is lacking, and social justice for our students – especially to our disenfranchised groups. Dean Rios Kravitz does not demand any less of herself than what she asks of us. Her commitment and energy are contagious and she makes you want to do better and to be a better educator. She is one of the best people I know and I consider it an honor to be her colleague and her friend. Educators do not get any better! “

I, her nominator, Victoria Henderson, admire her humanity greatly and her ability to impart universal values and a thirst for excellence to students. She has a drive to provide caring and outstanding leadership, and has a deep appreciation of community. She is a consummate and dedicated librarian and educator.

**NOMINATED BY**

Roberto Guzman  
Sacramento, California

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**1. Please tell us in 2-3 sentences why your nominee should win this award. What sets him/her apart?**

Rhonda is a great role model to our students, she is always helping both inside and beyond the walls of the library. I remember she helped me check out a voice recorder for my class when I was told I could not and she even gave me a pack of blank cassettes. Mrs. Rios is always help in outside the library and is an extraordinary community member.

**2. Please discuss how the nominee has helped you and/or others and made your experience of the library a more positive one. For instance, did the nominee assist you in a research project or enhance your students' learning experience?**

Mrs. Rios has helped our club a lot. When we did not have a classroom to hold our meetings she worked hard to find one and let us utilize it. Ensuring our success as student activists. Every time our club has a fundraiser Mrs. Rios always buys something from us and she even donated some drinks for our fundraiser. I am grateful to have such a wonderful librarian that ensures student success every time she can. I remember that a club member needed to watch a movie in which she had to analyze but could not find or check it out anywhere. Mrs. Rios checked this movie out for her, allowing her to write her analysis on the movie. Mrs. Rios again shows her genuine care for student success.

**3. How does the nominee make the college, community college, or university a better place?**

Mrs. Rios has a tendency to make any environment a positive growing experience whether it be in school or out of school. She has this atmosphere that when you are around her anything is possible and she will assist in making this vision of yours come true. If we had more staff like Mrs. Rios then we will all be successful students. Her dedication in students is noticeable when you first talk to her and she is very approachable.

**4. How has the library, and the nominee in particular, had an impact on students and faculty and the teaching and learning process?**

Mrs. Rios impact on our campus is immense she is always looking for ways to improve our campus regulations. This semester she offered me a job but I was not able to work due to my immigration status. She asked why? I then told her my situation and she began to advocate for my rights as a student to work at the campus. She is currently still working on trying to change that. Although she might not be able to do it, she has made me feel good and proud of her on how she handled the situation. Not alot of people would try to advcate for me but in doing so,she has shown me her heart of gold.

**5. How has the individual demonstrated leadership in the campus community?**

In our campus there is a limited amount of Latino/a staff members. Mrs. Rios is one of those Latinas who show great leadership skills to our Latino/a students especially to our female students. She is an active community member that also influences our Latina students to be as engaged in the community. She is always updating us on events and leadership trainings that make us stronger role models not leaders to our communities. She gives us responsibilities that challenges our leadership skills first hand. For example last semester we had to do a proposal for some laptops that were not being used. We had to make a proposal and propose it to depending on how we did determined whether or not we got the computers. This tool is useful when we propose for grants, donations and other things that I cannot think of right now.