

Citrus College Commencement 2023

Distinguished Faculty: Tasha VanHorn



Tasha VanHorn, a full-time speech instructor and distance education pioneer who has taught at Citrus College for 25 years, is the 2023 recipient of the Citrus College Distinguished Faculty Award.

VanHorn has made a significant impact in the Citrus College Language Arts and Library Division. In addition to developing online and honors public speaking courses, she also founded the Citrus College Speech Club and successfully advocated for free speech tutors and the development of the Citrus College Speech Lab.

"Day-by-day, my proudest moments are my students' successes," said VanHorn, who is retiring at the end of the 2022-2023 academic year. "Watching my students gain confidence in themselves is humbling and exciting."

As an instructor, VanHorn sought to engage students by making course content relevant to their own daily lives. For example, she designed informative speech assignments to be an opportunity for students to research their dream careers. She also encouraged students to research congressional bills for their persuasive speech assignments in order to learn more about the legislative process. To that end, VanHorn takes pride in having motivated and empowered students to become more politically active.

To make classes fun and reduce the anxiety surrounding giving speeches, VanHorn also brought in coloring projects and started each lesson with a "song-of-the-day."

"Students sometimes remembered the quote from the song, which is important because the quote focused on the concept or activity being taught that day," VanHorn said. "The music also contributed to an upbeat tone to start each class."

VanHorn's contributions to Citrus College have extended beyond the classroom. Over the years, she has participated in numerous academic panels and presentations, served in many leadership roles, and received various awards, including the 2007 Outstanding Community College Educator of the Year from the National Communication Association. VanHorn is also a nationally published communications scholar.

An alumna of Fullerton College, VanHorn graduated with highest honors from California State University, Fullerton, earning a bachelor's degree in communications and master's degree in speech communications.

On a personal note, VanHorn is the first in her family to go to college and is proud that all of her children, Steve, Angel and Ladonna, earned college degrees.

"I am truly humbled, honored and grateful for the opportunity to serve our students, Citrus College and my profession for 25 years," VanHorn added. "Citrus College has never been just a job or paycheck to me. Rather, it is the chance to carry on the legacy of my former professors who generously passed on their knowledge to me and others."

View Tasha VanHorn's commencement video on YouTube: <https://youtu.be/UAysGigzY5Y>