Santa Ana College earned recognition as one of the Orange County Register Top Workplaces for 2016, ranking 13th among large companies in the annual list and the only Orange County college or university recognized this year.

"Nurturing a culture of collaboration and equity is at the heart of Santa Ana College," said Santa Ana College President Linda Rose. "To ensure the greatest success possible for our students, it's critical that we offer a work environment that allows us to recruit and keep the most accomplished faculty, the best-qualified classified staff, and the best-trained managers.

Part of the Rancho Santiago Community College District, Santa Ana College serves more than 32,000 students each semester in its credit and non-credit programs. The college has a staff of more than 2,700, including 260 full-time faculty members, more than 1,400 part-time faculty, 222 full-time classified employees, more than 450 part-time classified employees and 26 administrators.

According to the district, it is constantly recruiting qualified, energetic and committed people to join its team in academic and classified positions, seeking employees who possess "a genuine interest in serving others.

Developing a workforce

Perhaps one of the most unique aspects of Santa Ana College among the Register's Top Workplaces is its impact on the local workforce beyond its own organization.

For the 2015-2016 academic year, Santa Ana College awarded 2,411 associate degrees and 2,322 certificates. The school ranks 19th nationally among the top 100 associate-degree producers for minority students and ninth among the top 100 associate-degree producers for Hispanic students, according to Community College Week. The college is also recognized throughout the state for its comprehensive workforce-training programs for nurses, firefighters, law enforcement and other medical and emergency personnel.

The college's stated mission is "to be a leader and partner in meeting the intellectual, cultural, technological and workforce development needs of our diverse community" and to provide "access and equity in a dynamic learning environment that prepares students for transfer, careers and lifelong intellectual pursuits in a global community.

Based on a LinkedIn analysis of Santa Ana College alumni in its database, the college's impact on Orange County's workforce extends well beyond its campus. Of the more than 17,000 former students who are registered on LinkedIn's website, 12,000 work in Orange County and another 2,300 work in the greater Los Angeles area. Former students are working in fields as diverse as operations; sales; healthcare; administration; education; business development; information technology; community and social services, engineering; and more.

Rich history

Celebrating its 100-year anniversary in 2015, Santa Ana College held its first classes in the fall of 1915 as Santa Ana Junior College, located on the campus of Santa Ana High School. With the country on the brink of World War I, the "Department Junior College" opened its doors to 24 students and 11 teaching faculty. Orange County's second junior college and California's fourth. The college moved to its permanent campus at
17th and Bristol streets in 1971, formally separating from the Santa Ana Unified School District to form the Rancho Santiago Community College District.

The school underwent a major expansion following the passage of Measure G in 2002, increasing the campus size from 55 to 65 acres with the College Avenue property acquisition. Upgrades included a new Orange County Sheriff's Regional Training Academy; a new maintenance/operations building; a new classroom building; an exercise-science locker-room complex; the Digital Media Center; the Early Childhood Education Center; building upgrades; improvements and repairs; an expansion and renovation of the Centennial Education Center; athletic-facility renovations; Nealley Library renovations; and a new electronic marquee.

More renovations followed the passage of Measure Q in 2012.