



For Immediate Release

Contact: Laura Best
Executive Director
202-281-5115
best@acad.org

ACAD Announces Recipient of Award for Excellence in Academic Leadership

Raleigh, NC – October 7, 2022 – The ACAD Board of Directors is proud to announce the recipient of the sixth annual Award for Excellence in Academic Leadership: Dr. Jessica Lavariega Monforti, Vice Provost, California State University Channel Islands. The award was established by ACAD to recognize individuals who exemplify excellence in academic leadership through shaping and supporting positive change on their campuses and in their communities.

As an academic leader, Dr. Lavariega Monforti has been key in moving institutions to be more inclusive, accessible, and equitable for students, faculty, and staff. She brings a solution-oriented, data-driven and student-first approach to her work. She has gone beyond the walls of higher education to promote positive change in communities as well. After serving on the Board of Directors for several years, she was elected to service as Vice President of KidSTREAM Children’s Museum where she has engaged in significant fundraising and community engagement. Additionally, Dr. Lavariega Monforti has built a reputation for getting things done, collaborative leadership, and advocating for student and community needs, particularly historically marginalized populations. These efforts not only reveal her character and decision but shed light on her efforts as a change agent inside and out of higher education.

“I’ve been friends with Dr. Jessica Lavariega Monforti for decades, and I’ve watched her transition from being a junior faculty member, to chairing an academic department, serving as a dean, and now moving into the provost’s office at CSU Channel Islands. Throughout that journey, I’ve been impressed with her commitment to her students, to justice, equity, inclusion, and belonging, and to making the academy a better place for everyone. When I heard about this award, it was immediately obvious to me that Jessica would make a strong candidate. She has used her positions of increasing power and authority to nudge those around her to make good decisions that bend the arc of justice, and has never lost sight of who it is for: students, including members of historically marginalized communities who are not always at top of mind when faculty and administrators are making decisions. Jessica uses her personal story and experiences as a guiding North Star, and has never lost herself. That’s what makes Jessica such a great friend, and what makes her such a great academic leader. I’m so delighted that her story resonated with the award committee and that she is being recognized with the ACAD Award for Excellence in Academic Leadership. Jessica truly embodies everything that the academy should value in its leadership.” Shares Melissa R. Michelson, Dean, Arts and Sciences, Menlo College and nominator of this award.

“To be honored by your peers for work in the area as important as leadership is incredibly gratifying and I am so thankful to my ACAD colleagues for this recognition.” writes Dr. Lavariega Monforti. “I am continually amazed by the incredible individuals I have had the privilege of learning from over the course of my career so far, and I’m grateful to the talented and dedicated faculty, staff, and students I work with every day.”

Inside and outside the academy, Dr. Lavariega Monforti truly embodies all that the ACAD Board wishes to promote and recognize as a recipient of this award. The presentation will take place during the ACAD Annual Meeting Keynote Luncheon on Thursday, February 23 in Tampa, FL.

Founded in 1945 ACAD is an individual membership organization dedicated to the professional development of academic leaders. Recognizing that provosts, deans, and other academic administrators undertake academic leadership as their “second discipline,” ACAD’s mission is to assist these leaders as they advance in careers dedicated to the ideals of liberal education. Information about ACAD membership, programs, and publications can be found by visiting www.acad.org