





# LEE KRICHMAR

## RANCHO SANTIAGO COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT

Supporting multiple campuses with a mission to  
make technology tools available for all

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**T**he Rancho Santiago Community College District (RSCCD) is divided into two distinct campuses: Santa Ana College and Santiago Canyon College, just 20 minutes apart. Combined, the schools serve around 90,000 students on an annual basis, which equates to around 34,000 full time equivalent students, making RSCCD one of the larger community college districts in California. Both commuter campuses attract students from a broad socioeconomic background, including a large Hispanic population. Santa Ana College is celebrating 100 years in operation, and on the other side of the coin, Santiago Canyon College is a relatively young institution, but both colleges are testing out and successfully launching some truly innovative ideas.

High school seniors from the Santa Ana Unified School District will soon be able to attend their hometown school and receive free tuition this fall. Santa Ana College is the only college in Orange County to offer this tuition-free first year — a savings of as much as \$1,100. Santa Ana College has also joined a small prototype program in California, allowing a handful of community colleges to offer bachelor's degrees in occupational studies without directly competing with four-year schools.

Behind all information and technology services for both campuses is Lee Krichmar, the assistant vice chancellor of information technology services for RSCCD. Since joining RSCCD in October 2014, Krichmar's focus has been to bring the best student experience possible to both campuses and improve the overall online user interface to make way for greater accessibility for all.

**Applying private sector business know-how to public higher education**

Krichmar brings a private sector background to her role today in public sector management. "I have been in multiple disciplines, including health care and insurance and I worked for GTech, a gaming company that ran the California state online lottery, but in all three disciplines I was in IT management," she says. "I've been leading IT shops for 30 years and I've always focused on building the best teams, managing the funds as efficiently as possible and delivering quality projects on a timely basis."

She joined the field of higher education in 1999, but only came to RSCCD about two years ago. "I worked for a single college district and was attracted to the multicampus setting of RSCCD and the great location and reputation the district has," she shares. "I saw a growth opportunity to tackle the challenge of managing and overseeing IT and technology initiatives for both campuses on a larger scope."

Krichmar says her private sector experience has helped her take a business-oriented approach when examining any new IT program, product or process RSCCD is rolling out. "I look at the ROI and the bottom line and the impact of the technology project's implication on the institution," she says. "I've worked in a highly competitive environment and I think that plays well into my role at RSCCD; competitive advantage is always my goal."

Today there are about 50 employees in the IT department at RSCCD. Krichmar is



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joined by four impressive directors: Stuart Davis, director of information systems; Jesse Gonzalez, director of network and communications; Alfonso Oropeza, director of academic support, Santiago Canyon College; and Archana Bhandari, director of academic support, Santa Ana College. Her directors lead a talented group of professionals supporting network and infrastructure, developers that deliver custom applications, and a technical team that supports two campuses, two large centers and various other locations.

Krichmar states, "Even though our IT management team is relatively new, we're very diverse and strong as individuals and highly motivated to work closely together and build a structure of standardization and efficiency. This is how we're going to gain efficiencies without having the expense of building a larger IT organization. My goal is to leverage the benefits of the cloud and find the strengths within strong vendor partnerships to fill any knowledge gaps within our department."



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## Leveraging strong partnerships: GST, Nth Generation, Ellucian

Krichmar has found three critical vendors that have proven to be innovative leaders and have specific skills to help RSCCD to achieve its technology goals: GST, Nth Generation and Ellucian.

Krichmar has worked with GST since 1999. “This local vendor has assisted me with many diverse projects. They pride themselves on being vendor agnostic, but have many solid industry partnerships, which is crucial. For example, they can offer sales, support and services for Hewlett-Packard Co., Dell and Lenovo computers,” Krichmar explains.

This proved useful when the RSCCD shared governance committee that Krichmar chairs, called TAG (technology advisory group), decided to evaluate the three leading desktop manufacturers. “I knew I could count on GST no matter which vendor was selected during our evaluation. And they understand the idiosyncrasies of purchasing from appropriate contracts and are experts within higher education. GST has also assisted with configuring and installing equipment for our mediated classrooms. We’ve standardized on new equipment and furniture that is accessible to individuals with disabilities, and our goal is to provide technology in all of our classrooms to aid in instruction,” she says.

RSCCD is also in discussions to fund laptop computers for all full-time incoming freshmen. This would aid students with continuous access to an affordable computing device and help promote student success initiatives.



# Fostering student success

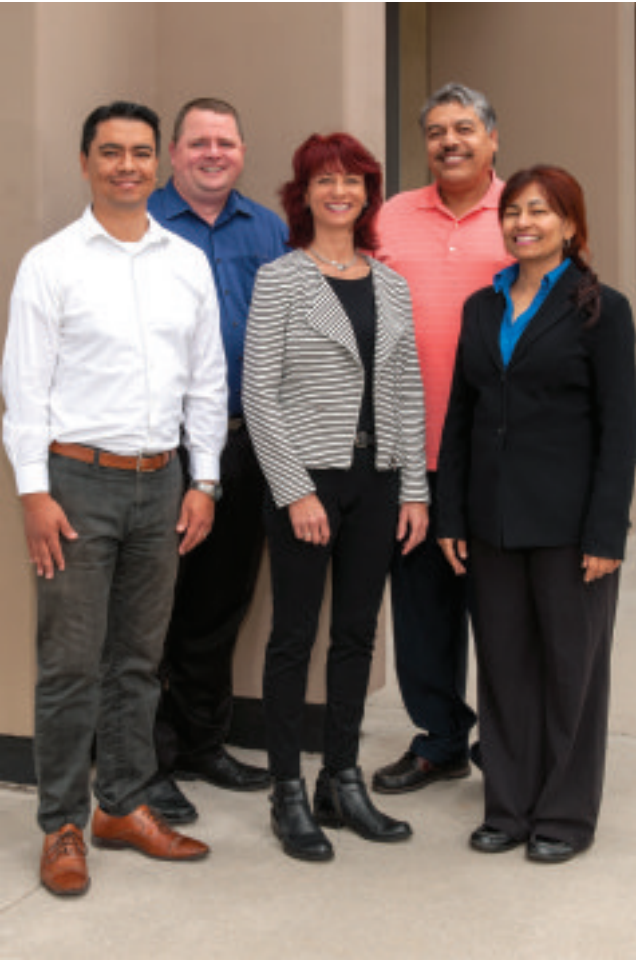
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“Nth Generation is another local vendor that has provided us with expertise with our network, server, SAN and related infrastructure equipment. We have leaned on Nth for their guidance and services for many years. They make themselves available to brainstorm with us and to provide us with strategic directions within the technology industry, which is critical. Their training and events have proven effective in providing us with knowledge of upcoming trends,” says Krichmar.

“Ellucian is our most valued vendor, since they provide us with our Colleague ERP for human resources, financials and our student modules,” adds Krichmar. “I am very elated that Ellucian, with its focus on higher education technology, is taking a leadership role within hosted and cloud computing. This aligns perfectly with my strategic direction.”

### Improving accessibility online

RSCCD is working to stand out in the competitive California Community College System by getting more information online and allowing more students to access it. “Back in 1999, when I started out in higher-ed everything began through a paper application and telephone registration, which are daunting, considering the high volume of applicants and enrollments that we have,” explains Krichmar. “Everything starts with the application process and trickles down from there.”

Since 1999, GST has been working with Lee Krichmar by providing her our expert technology solutions and services. With over 30 years of technology experience, GST has helped Lee realize some of her technology initiatives and has given her the power to maximum her return on investment. GST salutes Lee Krichmar as she continues to use her expertise to enhance the college experience.





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Krichmar's current strategic focus is to eventually provide online access to all services via any mobile device by leveraging the benefits of the cloud and strong partnerships. "My goal is to eventually have all of our services delivered online and on a smartphone and to provide a positive and responsive online experience in the process. Students want to do everything and anything from their phone, while they are anywhere," she says.

Now, Krichmar and her team are revolutionizing the process for their Colleague system, by implementing a portal powered by Amazon Web Services in the cloud with Ellucian. "We are trying to provide a technological doorway by helping students easily navigate to all of our online services," she says. "Before, these services were just a collection of links; there was no real clear navigation. The Ellucian Portal is designed to make things a lot more graceful and responsive and will provide us with single sign-on opportunities that we were unable to offer before."

The Ellucian Portal launched in July 2016. "We purchased the license at the district level so both campuses can use the portal, but each one is designed for our separate campuses and centers, including the individual colors and branding," Krichmar says. "We have about 1,300 students, give or take, who traverse both campuses and the hope is to improve communication and make them aware of some of the services available online — ones they might not know they're eligible to use."

"Class enrollment is one of the most critical tasks that students need to do," adds Krichmar. "Once their appointment time hits, students can login and enroll for classes wherever they are via the Ellucian Mobile application. Once enrollment is complete, students have a week to pay for their classes. Soon we plan to roll out the payment module within the mobile application."

Additionally, financial aid is also moving to more web-based platforms via the Ellucian financial aid self-service module. "All financial aid disbursements were recently converted to an electronic format so students are now able to access their financial aid money quicker," says Krichmar.

The Colleague portal, along with many other programs such as student email and Microsoft Office 365 are moving to the cloud at RSCCD. "More services are migrating to the cloud to offer a secure, stable environment for systems and we're adding robust programs," says Krichmar. "For example, students can access their .edu email from the cloud for both campuses and can use web-applications or download the full applications such as Microsoft Word, Excel and Power Point from the cloud if they do not have the program on their laptop or tablet. Every active student has access to a OneDrive account to store their files in the cloud as well."

### Optimizing the benefits of the cloud

Krichmar says that by moving more programs and information to a cloud-based network, accessibility is improved. "Not all of our students have a laptop, home computer or internet access at home, so we're working to open up access anywhere — whether they're at the library, campus or a coffee shop," she notes. "We're also working to bring more services down to the mobile level because nearly all students have a mobile device. We offer reliable, high-speed Wi-Fi at all locations because we don't want students to have to worry about using their own data or be faced with limitations for internet connectivity."

During the summer of 2016 RSCCD will be migrating their Colleague ERP, WebAdvisor and Image Now into the hosted cloud environment. They are also bringing up a federated ID system in the cloud, which includes migrating a copy of their Microsoft active directory. Krichmar states, "My long term goal is to build a robust cloud environment that can sustain our core technology in case of an on-premise disaster at either of our campus locations."

From email to storage, to the applications and devices that are integral for students to perform their assignments, Lee Krichmar and her IT team at the Rancho Santiago Community College District are supporting two diverse campus communities by adding convenience, building a more positive student experience with a more flexible delivery method, and in turn, enabling student success. •