2012 John & Suanne Roueche Excellence Award
Recipient: Rafael D. Alvarez
San Diego City College MESA Director

“I am Rafael Alvarez, the Director of the San Diego City College Math, Engineering, Science Achievement (MESA) Program. Our MESA Program is the best academic support and transfer program for students in Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) majors. The secret is "culture"! Success in higher education, especially in STEM, requires application of a learning culture. Our MESA program has an explicit STEM culture of success, with a language of success, which is critical for our students, who are typically first generation college students and lack the social and cultural capital that is necessary for success in college. The STEM Culture of Success approach provides a dynamic vehicle for instilling an internal locus of control and promoting resiliency in students. In our STEM culture, students are taught accountability and a purpose for the learning. Furthermore, our culture approach facilitates impactful student engagement, high expectations for student achievement, validation of students, and an increased sense of belonging. The cornerstone of our STEM culture is the Foundation for Learning: student success begins with a strong foundation for learning. Beyond developing scholars, our STEM culture develops leaders. All MESA students are trained in our STEM culture. They own and apply the culture; and they take it wherever they go to create their own success.

“The John & Suanne Roueche Excellence Award inspires me to continue the work of engaging, educating, and empowering the next generation of mathematicians, engineers and scientists. Their success is my reward. Their achievements prove that MESA works!”

For more information about the City College MESA Program, visit www.sdcity.edu/mesa

About the John & Suanne Roueche Excellence Award
John E. and Suanne D. Roueche, leaders in the community college field and early proponents of the idea that teachers have major responsibility for how well students perform in the classroom, have been partners and friends of the League for Innovation in the Community College for over thirty-five years. What began as a working relationship with the founders of the League has evolved into a full-fledged partnership through collaborative efforts on projects of mutual interest and national concern.

In recognition of the long tradition of excellence in community college teaching and leadership, the League established the John & Suanne Roueche Excellence Awards in 2012. Open to League Alliance member institutions, these awards celebrate outstanding contributions and leadership by community college faculty and staff. Recipients are recognized in a series of activities and promotions, and honored at special events at the League's Innovations conference each spring.

For more information about the League, visit www.league.org