



Joel L. Kinnamon, Ed.D.
Area 4 Trustee
(He/Him)

Dr. Joel Kinnamon, College of the Desert President Emeritus, College of the Desert Board of Trustee, and California Indian Nations College Trustee has served in higher education for more than 30 years and retired as Superintendent/President of College of the Desert on March 31, 2021. He was elected to the COD Board of Trustees to represent Area 4 in November 2022 for a four-year term.

Dr. Kinnamon is a first-generation college graduate. He attended Seminole Junior College in Oklahoma and then transferred to Oklahoma State University earning a Bachelor of Science (B.S.) in Agricultural Economics. He received a Master's in Business Administration (M.B.A.) at Oklahoma City University and Doctorate (Ed.D.) in Education from Nova Southeastern University.

In July 2012, Dr. Kinnamon assumed the role of Superintendent/President at College of the Desert. During his time at College of the Desert, he oversaw tremendous growth, witnessed the completion and renovation of numerous buildings on the Palm Desert Campus, the expansion of the Mecca/Thermal Campus, and the opening of the East Valley Campus in Indio. The college also opened satellite classrooms in Desert Hot Springs and a temporary campus in Palm Springs. In November 2016, voters approved a \$578 million bond that allows for continued facility expansion; including building a permanent West Valley Campus in Palm Springs to fulfill a twenty-year community commitment providing access to underserved communities, and doubling the size of the East Valley Campus in Indio, and creating a University Center that allows students to remain in the Coachella Valley to earn a bachelor's or graduate level degree.

In May 2021, the College celebrated the largest graduating class in its 60-year history for the seventh straight year. While President of COD, the College became the fastest growing community colleges in the state of California. During his tenure, he increased and diversified the number of faculty and staff and implemented services to targeted student populations resulting in higher success rates. These actions resulted in COD earning state and national awards and nominations for excellence including the Aspen Prize for Community College Excellence and a winner of the prestigious Bellwether Award.

When Dr. Kinnamon arrived at COD in 2012 to serve as superintendent/president, the college faced an \$8 million deficit owed to the State Chancellor's Office for a previous inappropriate reporting of the number of full-time equivalent student enrolled. By the time Dr. Kinnamon retired in March 2021, College of the Desert was in its best financial shape ever with approximately \$30 million in reserves.

During his first term as a Board of Trustee for College of the Desert, Dr. Kinnamon ensured major investments across the Coachella Valley, including \$405 million for the West Valley Campus in Palm Springs, \$37 million for the Roadrunner Motors Automotive Technology Center in Cathedral City, completion of the \$70 million Indio Campus expansion, a \$17 million Science Building renovation at the Palm Desert campus, \$38 million in new athletic facilities and sports fields, and a \$4.6 million accelerator facility. During this period, student enrollment returned to pre-COVID levels, state funding increased, a permanent president was appointed, and beginning in Fall 2026, free college tuition will be available to all Coachella Valley residents.

Dr. Joel Kinnamon lives in Rancho Mirage with his husband, Chris Parman. They have been together for 28 years and were the first gay couple to be married on the Assembly Floor of the State Capitol in 2008.