



Office of the
President

October 8, 2024

Dear Colleagues,

Last week we announced Cerritos College earned the prestigious 2024 Seal of *Excelencia*. First, I want to congratulate everyone on this remarkable achievement. This certification is a reflection of the dedication and hard work from everyone on our campus.

For those unfamiliar, the Seal of *Excelencia* was introduced in 2018 to recognize higher education institutions for advancing Latino student success. Their criteria are built from analyzing over 20 years of successful initiatives proven to increase Latino student success from enrollment through graduation. The rigorous application process required us to demonstrate our intentionality and evidence of success in serving our Latino students across our entire campus. We had to prove how all of us are making an impact for our students – to remove barriers, provide leadership, and enact change for the betterment of our students.

Now, we are among 46 colleges and universities driving change in our communities through the power of education. We are one of eight institutions who earned the Seal of *Excelencia* in 2024, and **the third California community college to achieve this since the Seal's inception**. The certification is an indicator to our entire nation that we are at the forefront of transforming higher education. More importantly, it sends a powerful message to our community:

- We are an elite institution
- We are the launchpad for their social and economic mobility
- We are here to make higher education accessible to them

Our work isn't done. The Seal certification is valid for three years, after which we must undergo recertification process – demonstrating how we have continued to advance our Latino students in enrollment, retention, transfer, graduation, and more. That work starts now. In alignment with our Students First Framework, we will continue to reimagine the work we do at Cerritos College to better serve our students and achieve our goal of graduating 50% of our students within five years or less.

I want to thank everyone who was involved in the application process – whether you were gathering data, sharing departmental insights, or reviewing and writing responses. Through your collective efforts, we told our compelling story to the review board.

Thank you all for your incredible work. I look forward to the next three years as we continue to advance all our students to success.

Sincerely,

Jose L. Fierro, D.V.M., Ph.D.
President/Superintendent
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