



May 18, 2026

Dear Colleagues,

Today marks the beginning of an extraordinary week for Cerritos College.

This Friday, we will be welcoming more than 1,250 graduates on the field and over 10,000 family members and guests to Falcon Stadium. This milestone reflects far more than growing enrollment or institutional success. It represents transformed lives, expanded opportunities, and the collective impact of a college community deeply committed to student achievement.

One of the most meaningful moments of Commencement for me happens after the ceremony concludes, when I have the opportunity to take photos with our graduates and their loved ones. In those moments, you see the full story behind every diploma. You see parents holding back tears, siblings cheering with pride, children looking up at graduates with admiration, and families celebrating sacrifices that often go unseen.

Those moments serve as a powerful reminder that no student reaches this milestone alone.

Every graduate who walks across that stage carries with them the encouragement of faculty, the support of classified professionals, the guidance of counselors and managers, and the belief of an entire college community that refused to let them give up on themselves. Commencement is not only a celebration of our students. It is a celebration of every person at Cerritos College who helped make their success possible.

Classified School Employees Week

It is especially meaningful that this week also coincides with Classified School Employees Week.

Classified professionals are among the most essential contributors to student success and the daily life of our institution. While much of your work happens behind the scenes, its impact is felt in every corner of our campus and in the lives of the students we serve.

You are often the first people students encounter when they arrive at Cerritos College and the people they continue to rely on throughout their journey. Whether supporting instruction, maintaining campus operations, assisting students through admissions and financial aid, welcoming students at the front counter, or ensuring our campus functions effectively every day, your work creates the conditions that allow students to persist, thrive, and believe they belong here.

Many of the graduates we celebrate this Friday reached that moment because someone at

Cerritos College encouraged them during a difficult time, answered a question with patience, helped them navigate a challenge, or simply made them feel seen and supported.

That work matters deeply.

Thank you for your professionalism, your compassion, and your unwavering commitment to our students and one another. This week, we proudly celebrate and honor all that you contribute to Cerritos College.

Budget Update – Governor’s May Revision

Last week, Governor Newsom released the May Revision of the State Budget, and the message from Sacramento continues to reflect cautious optimism amid ongoing economic uncertainty.

While state revenues exceeded January projections by approximately \$16.5 billion, much of that increase is tied to gains in the artificial intelligence and stock market sectors, both of which remain volatile and difficult to sustain long term. As the Legislative Analyst’s Office noted, the state must continue to approach future spending carefully given continued economic uncertainty.

Consistent with this outlook, the Governor’s revised proposal focuses primarily on restoring prior reductions and addressing existing deficits while limiting major new spending commitments.

For community colleges, the proposal includes:

- Statutory COLA from 2.41% plus 1.44% COLA tied to implementation of paid pregnancy disability leave. We do not have many details as to how the 1.44% can be utilized.
- Modest additional support for enrollment growth
- Increased funding for student support block grants

While these developments are encouraging, the budget process remains ongoing, and revisions may occur before final adoption in June. We will continue monitoring developments closely and keep the campus informed as additional information becomes available.

State of the College – Access in Action

Earlier this month, we hosted our annual State of the College event, bringing together legislators, K–12 and university partners, business leaders, and community members to reflect on our progress and discuss the future of Cerritos College.

This year’s theme, Access in Action, reflected our continued commitment to expanding educational opportunity, strengthening workforce pathways, and advocating for the students and communities we serve.

Throughout the program, we highlighted efforts to increase access to higher education, expand bachelor’s degree opportunities, and create workforce training pathways that lead to long-term economic mobility and community impact.

These accomplishments are only possible because of the extraordinary dedication, innovation,

and collaboration of our faculty, classified professionals, managers, and students. I encourage you to view the presentation and take pride in all that we continue to accomplish together.

Events of this scale also require tremendous effort behind the scenes. Please join me in thanking the following individuals and groups for their outstanding contributions to this year's State of the College event:

Javier Ruiz
Faizal Pedraza
Armando Garcia
Juan Garcia
Tramaine Peele
Eric Oniel
Donnie Hawkins
Carlos Serna
Amber Douglas
Jesusita Lopez
Culinary Arts Students
David Rincon
Sarah Pirtle
Jeniffer Mercado
Kelly Kwan
Aya Aoki
Chelsea Van Doornum
Eric Calderon
Lilia Delgado
Etelvina Jurado
Victoria Hirota
Wendy Thomas
Andrea Wittig
Monica Acuna
Christy Martinez
Sasha Leonardo

Thank you all for helping make this event such a success and for continuing to demonstrate what makes Cerritos College so special.

As we prepare to celebrate our graduates this week, I hope you take pride in the role you play in transforming lives and creating opportunity every single day.

The impact of this institution is not measured only by the degrees we award, but by the hope we create, the doors we open, and the futures we help make possible.

Thank you for everything you do for our students and community.

Jose

Jose L. Fierro, D.V.M., Ph.D.
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