

## Acknowledgments

The Cerritos College Foundation is acknowledged for its generous, consistent, and annual financial support to the Outstanding Classified/ Confidential Awards project from its inception.

### Outstanding Classified and Confidential Employee of the Month Selection Committee

Ms. Erin Miles  
Committee Chair  
Human Resources

Ms. Monica Acuña  
Staff Development Assistant  
Human Resources

Ms. Toni Grijalva  
Classified Representative  
Public Affairs

Ms. Chanthy Hum  
Classified Representative  
Student Services

Ms. Kathy Hogue  
Classified Representative  
Technology

Lance Kayser  
Faculty Representative

Ms. Catherine Lu  
Classified Representative  
Public Affairs

Christy Martinez  
Confidential Representative

Katie Mishler  
Classified Representative

Ms. Mayra Radillo  
Classified Representative  
Purchasing

Ms. Ramona Mellgoza  
Classified Representative  
Purchasing

Roxanne Mitchell  
Classified Representative

Ms. Vanessa Rodriguez  
Classified Representative  
IERPG

Yvette Tafoya  
ACCME Representative

Ms. Victoria Vaja  
Classified Representative  
Health Occupations

# 2023-2024 Outstanding Classified and Confidential Awards Ceremony



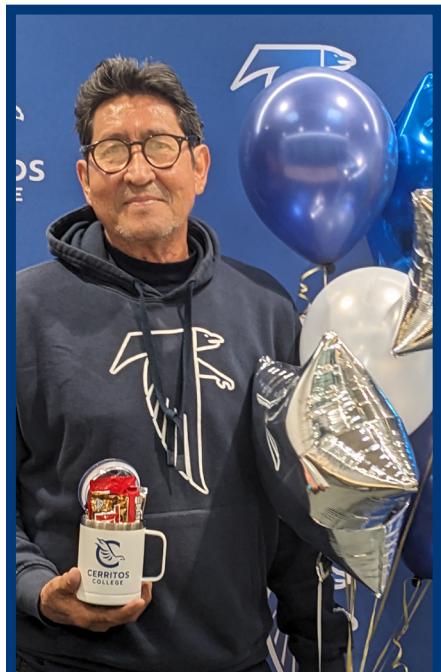
Thursday  
May 23, 2024  
11a.m.  
Student Center

For further information concerning the Outstanding Classified and Confidential Selection Committee or Awards Ceremony, contact Monica Acuña at [macuna@cerritos.edu](mailto:macuna@cerritos.edu)



**The 2023– 2024  
Classified and Confidential  
Awards Ceremony  
is dedicated to**

**Elias Ortega and  
Schellary Thomas**



## **Cerritos College Administration**

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

Frank Mixon, Ph.D.  
Vice President of Academic Affairs/  
Assistant Superintendent

Felipe Lopez  
Vice President of Business Services/  
Assistant Superintendent

Mercedes Gutierrez, Ed.D.  
Vice President of Human Resources/  
Assistant Superintendent

Robyn Brammer Ph.D.  
Vice President of Student Services/  
Assistant Superintendent

## **Board of Trustees**

Dr. Sandra Salazar  
President

Marisa Perez  
Member

Mariana Pacheco  
Vice President

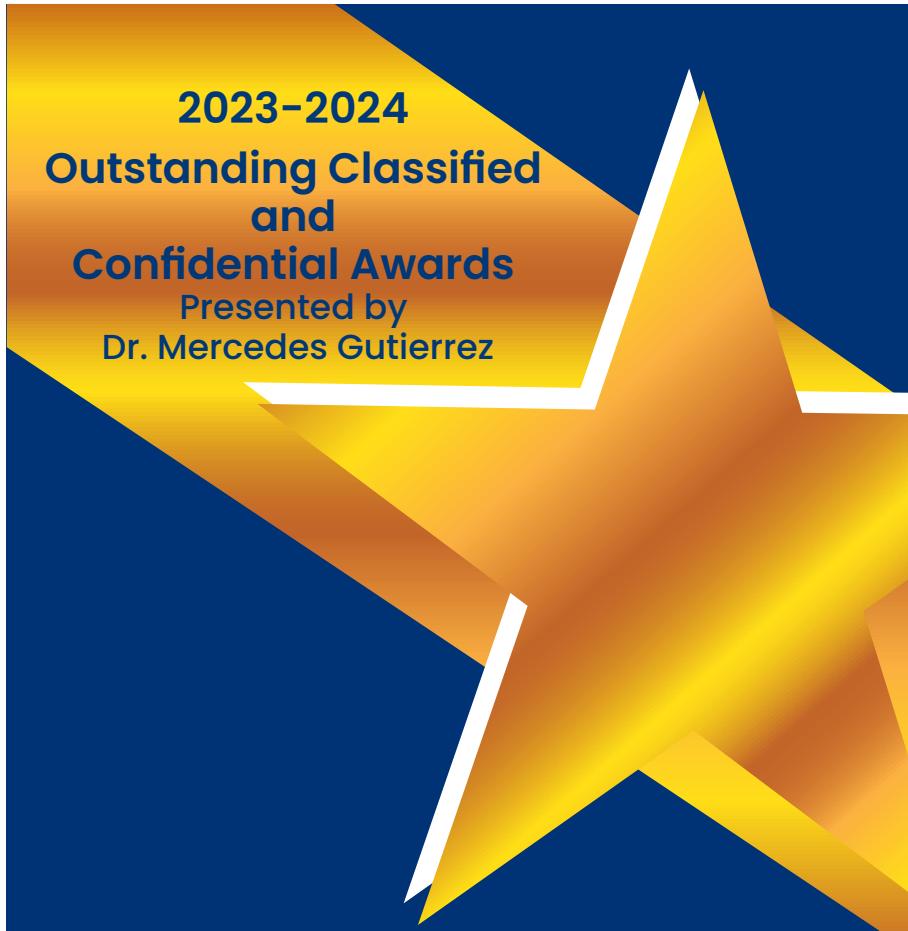
Dr. Shin Liu  
Member

James Cody Birkey  
Member

Dawn Green  
Clerk

Zurich Lewis  
Member

Jacki Stone Scott  
Student Member



**2023-2024  
Outstanding Classified  
and  
Confidential Awards**  
Presented by  
**Dr. Mercedes Gutierrez**

## Meet the 2023-2024 Stars

**Luz Ocampo**  
May 2023

**Edith Finney**  
June 2023

**Sam Millard**  
July 2023

**Linda Kaufman**  
August 2023

**Nayeli Duenas -**  
September 2023

**Samuel Chavez**  
October 2023

**Antonio Laverman**  
November 2023

**Judy Salas**  
December 2023

**Janet Yanez**  
January 2024

**Stephanie Minami**  
February 2024

**Elias Ortega**  
March 2024

**Jamal Ingram**  
April 2024

# 2023-2024 Cerritos College Outstanding Classified and Confidential Awards

**Welcome**  
Michele Kingston  
CSEA

## Years of Service Awards

**Presented by**  
Dr. Jose Fierro  
President/Superintendent

Dr. Mercedes Gutierrez  
Vice President of Human Resources/  
Assistant Superintendent

### Five Years

Laura Miln  
Erik Osuna  
Sara Chavez  
Cesiah Gonzalez  
Anabelle Cabiling  
Horton  
Grant Davis  
Daniel De Avila  
Drue Zebulon Price  
Jose De La Torre  
Joseph Joson  
Daphney Belton  
Andres Zuniga  
Zolita Fisher  
Joseph Carrillo II  
Tonee Burdick  
Hugh Nguyen  
Irma Corado  
Jamal Ingram  
Suleman Hamid  
Kelly Rios  
Edward Diaz  
Marysol Gonzalez  
Marc Maruzzo

### Ten Years

Victoria Vaja  
Vince Vizcarra  
Laura Sanchez  
Marissa Markey  
Leodomiro Lopez  
Samuel Millard  
Katherine Mishler  
Jenny Mejia  
Martha Moncada  
Karla Duarte  
Brenda Sierra  
Daniel Espinoza  
Daniel Becerra  
Caitlin Mullins

### Twenty Years

Julie Mun  
Evelyn Mattison  
Silvia Varela  
Maricela Pedroza  
Veronica Castro

### Twenty-Five Years

John Echevarria  
Keven Butler  
Elias Ortega  
Miguel Arias  
Lucy Self  
Kathy Hogue  
Ramona Mellgoza  
Paul Badzey  
Robert Ho  
Cindy Lo  
Marina Rodriguez  
Veronica Boss  
Roxanne Mitchell  
Rosario Vasquez

### Fifteen Years

Shannon Estrada  
Jaime Casillas Sr.  
Joshua Tolen  
Janice O'Neal  
Daniel Tufnell

### Thirty-Five Years

Kimberly Applebury



# Most Outstanding Classified Employee of the Year

Presented by Dr. Fierro

## Foundation Presentation

Etelvina De La Torre

Interim Executive Director of  
Foundation and Community Advancement

## October 2023 Samuel Chavez

Web Support Technician  
Office of Public Relations and  
Communications

Samuel began his career at Cerritos College in 1998 as a short-term hourly for two departments;

The Learning Assistance Program (now known as the Success Center) as a technology trainer, and the

Kinesiology Department as a web author and sports photographer.

In 2008, he was hired as a permanent classified employee for the Public Affairs/Web Administration Department. Samuel has always been a behind-the-scenes “angel.” When you need anything website-related, Samuel is your man! He is very kind, patient, and willing to help you on any level you need. He has a wealth of information and speaks to you on a non-webmaster level. He never makes your questions seem insignificant or dumb, for lack of a better word. He takes his time when helping you and will help you in the best, most efficient way possible.

If there is an emergency, a campus alert, or a public relations issue, no matter the time, he is still contacted to upload and update that information to the website. He does it without complaint and will always be polite, professional, and prompt in his response to resolve issues.

It is no wonder this is Samuel’s third Employee of the Month Award and second Employee of the Year Honor.



## Unsung Hero

### Erik Duane

Sr Tech Support Specialist  
Information Technology/MIT

Erik Duane was raised by a single mother who worked as a para-educator and was a proud union advocate.

His mother taught him the value of service from a very young age. He continued this legacy by joining the Marine Corps Reserves and serving proudly for 30 years.

He also continued his mother's legacy of service by becoming a Classified Employee of CSEA union sibling. Erik has served in union leadership since January 2019 as the first Vice President and has been the union's Chief Negotiator for that duration as well.

In 2024, he accepted the role of Corresponding Secretary to enable him to mentor and train the next generation of CSEA leaders who joined the board. He also serves as the Student Advisor to the Veterans Club at Cerritos College.

Service is ingrained in Erik the way breathing is ingrained in us all.



## May 2023 Luz Ocampo

### Program Assistant Facilities

Luz began her career at Cerritos College in 1985 as a bookstore employee. She joined the Facilities team in 1998. This is the third time Luz has been honored with the Employee of the Month Award.

Those fortunate enough to come in contact with Luz will always receive excellent care through her service excellence. Whenever an employee reaches out to Luz, she always responds with a positive attitude and energy. She never says no; she moves immediately and quickly to resolve any and all issues presented to her on the spur of the moment and always comes up with a solution. We don't know what we would do without Luz. She is an instrumental part of the facilities department and a HUGE part of what keeps the campus moving and flowing successfully daily.



## June 2023 Edith Finney

### Human Resources Technician Human Resources

Edith is a true professional at what she does and has always gone above and beyond in her position as HR Technician I. Edith works with recruitment, a hectic function in the Office of Human Resources. Specifically, this past year Edith was the lead in posting over 30 recruitments, all while she patiently onboarded and trained two new HR staff members. She consistently demonstrates a high level of dedication in her efforts to handle confidential documents, phone calls, and walk-ins appropriately.

She always invites questions from selection committee members and answers them carefully. Edith believes in fair and equitable HR processes and does whatever she can to ensure that integrity is upheld in all HR processes. Edith is our Human Resources rock star; she never fails to provide the service excellence that Cerritos College is known for. Each of Edith's HR colleagues has a high level of respect for her and the institutional knowledge she shares, and all enjoy working alongside her.



July 2023  
Sam Millard

## Maintenance Mechanic Woodworking

Sam began his career at Cerritos College in 2006 as a short-term hourly in the Woodworking Department and was hired full-time in 2014.

Sam has always been ready and willing to assist students and faculty with their needs to ensure they can successfully complete their goals.

Sam always displays a very positive attitude when fulfilling the requests of students and faculty in the woodworking department. He has proven time and time again to be an excellent and highly valued employee. Most recently, Sam worked tirelessly to rearrange, organize, and set up the shop where the new intensive, full-time student program will be held. This required frequent, ongoing, and successful coordination with faculty, the Purchasing Department, and the IT Department to ensure the shop was set up correctly. Sam took on this effort to demonstrate the service excellence our campus strives to provide to our students and the surrounding community, and we appreciate all that he does in the department.



## August 2023 Linda Kaufman

### Administrative Assistant Business Services

Linda began her career with Cerritos College in 1989 as the first Division Secretary in the Humanities/Social Sciences Division. She was promoted to Administrative Assistant in 2000 in Business Services.

Linda is a superstar who has played a vital role in Cerritos College's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Her contributions have been instrumental in ensuring that our campus remains at the forefront of these unprecedented times. Linda's tireless efforts have resulted in Cerritos College consistently having an ample supply of essential items such as PPE, cleaning supplies, equipment, COVID tests, computers, software, and more. She dedicated countless hours tracking vendors and placing orders to obtain the necessary resources. Cerritos College has utilized approximately \$ 40,000,000 in HEERF funds during the pandemic, and Linda has played a pivotal role in managing these expenditures.

As the campus began to reopen, she went above and beyond by creating and packaging care packages for all employees, demonstrating her commitment to their welfare.

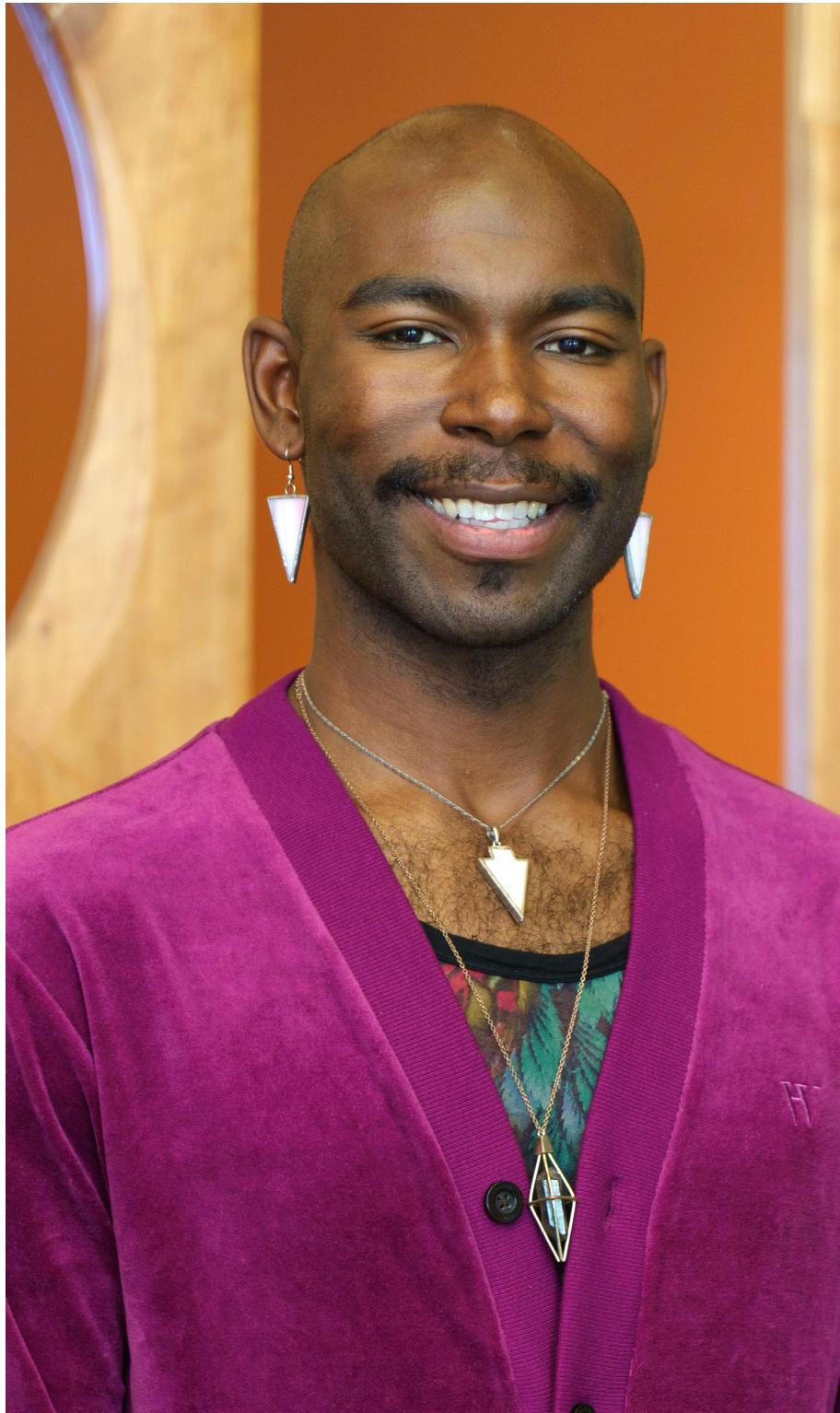


## September 2023 Nayeli Duenas

### Program Assistant Counseling

Nayeli began her career at Cerritos College in 2015.

Nayeli is a significant contributor to student success at Cerritos College. She goes above and beyond to serve our students daily in her role in the Counseling Department. She is attentive, resourceful, and compassionate when interacting with students. When there is a challenge in the Counseling Department, she is almost always the first person to identify a potential solution. As a result of her student-centered expertise, Nayeli has served as an integral part of the district's efforts to implement EAB and LCP Success Teams. Additionally, Nayeli is always flexible with her time and priorities to serve the department's and our students' needs. Nayeli is a reliable team player who is always ready to jump in wherever needed so that the Counseling Department can assist students successfully and meet department goals.



## November 2023

### Antonio "Nio" Lavermon

#### Program Facilitator Student Equity and Success

Nio came to Cerritos in 2021 as students returned to the campus post-pandemic. Going to campus as a new employee was challenging, and Nio joined Cerritos while students were navigating many post-pandemic obstacles. Despite these challenges, he took little time to embrace Cerritos and our students, becoming an exemplary Falcon leader.

Nio has fostered a welcoming and safe environment in the Equity Center, supporting many campus student equity initiatives. He has expanded the visibility of the support programs for all marginalized student identities, encouraged students' sense of belonging, and empowered students to be advocates for themselves and their peers. He is an excellent communicator and consistently provides notices to the campus about upcoming campus and community activities. He can be seen at most (if not all) campus activities, where he is always sharing smiles, making new connections, and elevating the positive energy of the event.



## December 2023

### Judy Salas

#### Administrative Assistant Student Services

Over the past two years, Judy has demonstrated outstanding support and administrative expertise. She exudes an appreciation for others and has helped to lead the campus' CARING campus efforts.

Everyone who meets her knows they will be heard, supported, and encouraged. She takes time with everyone she encounters. Judy goes above and beyond to help students, staff, and faculty feel welcome.

Over the past two months, she volunteered to help with the Dynamic Forms launch. She took it upon herself to learn the new system and answer questions that might arise from our managers and staff. In addition to these moments of care and support, she maintains her excellence level. Judy always performs above expectations.



## January 2024

### Janet Yanez

#### Program Assistant Educational Partnerships and Programs

Janet was selected for a categorical Admin Clerk III position for a Teacher TRAC grant about a year ago. Before working full-time in EPP, Janet was a short-term hourly for many years, including filling a temporary full-time position in the Liberal Arts Division Office.

Janet is truly unique. With all of the growing EPP programs, she quickly became an asset in EVERY program. She developed several Excel pivot tables to automate dual enrollment textbook information, Teacher TRAC support, and Learning Communities. She did all that while learning each program and responding to student and community visits to the Educational Programs and Pathways office. Janet truly cares about every student and is one of our campus's most friendly and welcoming individuals.



## February 2024 Stephanie Minami

EOPS Specialist  
Extended Opportunity Programs and Services

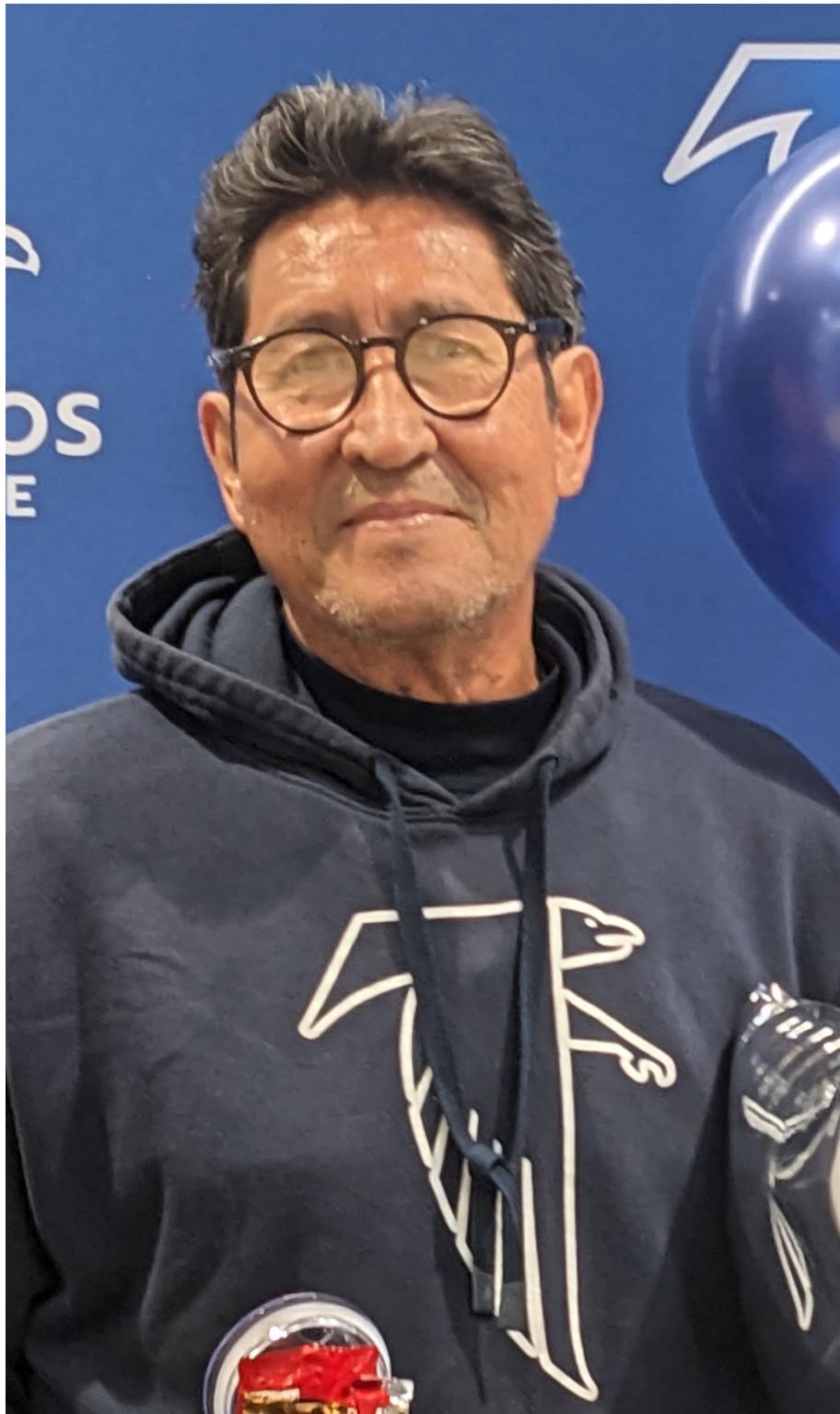
Stephanie began her career at Cerritos College in 2015 as a program Assistant in Public Affairs.

Within eight months, she was promoted to Foundation Secretary for the Cerritos College Foundation.

In 2018, Stephanie was promoted to EOPS Specialist in the EOPS department.

A student nominated her, who is a single mother of three. She writes, "Stephanie has been helpful and inspiring to me. If I am having difficulty dealing with life, she is always there to talk. Stephanie is very caring and loving toward me and the other students who deal with the hardship of motherhood while being a student. Stephanie always points me in the right direction and finds resources that help me stay on track."

Stephanie provides high-quality work and excellent customer service and approaches campus daily with grace and a smile.



## March 2024 Elias Ortega

### Locker Room Attendant Physical Education/Athletics

Today, we honor the memory of Elias Ortega. He was not only a colleague but a friend, and an integral part of our team in the athletics department. Elias brought his dedication and kindness to everything he did, leaving a lasting impression on all who had the privilege of working alongside him.

Elias Ortega has been with Cerritos College since 1998. He worked as a locker room attendant. He worked with all our sport programs and focused on Football, Basketball, and Baseball. Elias always had a smile on his face and was always willing to take on any task to help the division.

Elias was recognized as employee of the Month for March 2024. He was working with our spring football and baseball programs. The very next month he noticed some health issues and on May 9, 2024, he passed away. Elias will leave behind his wife, Maria Teresa Velasquez Ortega also a Cerritos employee, his two sons Chris and Issac and granddaughter Eli.

Though his physical presence may be absent, his spirit remains woven into the fabric of our Falcon Athletic Programs.



April 2024  
Jamal Ingram

Athletic Eligibility Specialist  
Kinesiology

Jamal began his career at Cerritos College in 2019

He meets with the teams and individually with any athlete who can't make the designated meetings. Jamal also assists each sport with the fall banquet and ensures each sport has certificates as needed. What makes Jamal stand out is how he assists students when he sees them struggling. Our student-athletes can be demanding at times, and Jamal is always helpful. He has helped many students transfer and supports the faculty with all incoming prospective student-athletes. Jamal is always enthusiastic about his job and is a solid foundation for the athletic department to be successful.