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Cerritos College achieves historic milestone with nearly 8,000 degrees and certificates conferred in graduation celebration

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NORWALK, Calif. – May 22, 2024 – For the third consecutive year, Cerritos College honored its largest graduating class in the campus's history. During its 66th annual commencement ceremony held on May 17, the college conferred nearly **8,000** degrees and certificates. The Class of 2024 overwhelmingly surpassed last year's record-breaking number of degrees and certificates by an impressive 1,800 awards.



The Class of 2024



Student Speaker Annie Gutierrez

Student commencement speaker Annie Gutierrez congratulated the Class of 2024 for their

accomplishments and shared her story of perseverance and resilience. Annie's passion for art led her to pursue animation and graphic design studies at Cerritos College in 2016. Her path took an unexpected turn in 2019 when she was diagnosed with ovarian cancer, prompting a temporary break from college. After returning in 2020, she resumed her coursework in animation and graphic design amidst the challenges posed by the pandemic. In 2021, Annie faced yet another obstacle when a tumor was found in her brain, putting her education on hold a second time. After nearly two years of treatment and recovery, she returned to Cerritos College in 2023 with a new determination to pursue a career in dental assisting and received her associate degree in just three semesters. This summer, she will participate in an internship at a

dental office to gain hands-on experience working with patients.

"Yes, I have a neurological disability, and I'm a cancer survivor, but I am also a dental assistant. I have much more than what I believe was an unexpected setback in my life," she said. "What you may see as the end of the world does not define who you are and what you choose to do in life."

Cerritos College recently set an ambitious goal to graduate fifty percent of our students within five years or less by spring 2029. The increase in graduation numbers is a clear indication that the college's efforts and strategies toward achieving this goal are on the right track.

"We are incredibly proud to celebrate another historic year at Cerritos College," said Dr. Jose Fierro, Cerritos College President/Superintendent. "Each graduate has a unique story of overcoming adversity to reach this milestone. I am confident that our graduates are prepared to confront challenges in times of uncertainty and effect positive change in the world."

About Cerritos College: Cerritos College serves as a comprehensive community college for southeastern Los Angeles County. Communities within the college's district include Artesia, Bellflower, Cerritos, Downey, Hawaiian Gardens, La Mirada, Norwalk, and portions of Bell Gardens, Lakewood, Long Beach, Santa Fe Springs, and South Gate. Cerritos College offers nearly 300 degree and certificate programs in nine divisions. Annually, more than 5,000 students successfully complete their course of studies. Enrollment currently averages 21,000 students. Visit Cerritos College online at <http://www.cerritos.edu/>.

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