

**Dr. Jose Fierro**  
**President's Message**  
**November 21, 2017**

Dear Colleagues,

As we celebrate Thanksgiving, I want you to know that I am extremely grateful for the opportunity to serve this amazing institution. Thanksgiving is always a good time for all of us to reflect on the many things that inspire our gratitude. Personally, I am grateful for the opportunity to serve side-by-side with such incredible staff, faculty, and students who work tirelessly to improve the opportunities for our campus community. Being on campus every day reminds me of the important contributions that we make, but this time of the year reinforces the great privilege and responsibility we have to impact in the lives of so many young people. It's truly humbling.

In the spirit of gratitude, I want to take this time to highlight some of the College's recent awards that could not be possible without the work of our campus community.

**Bellwether Award**

**More good news!** I shared earlier this week that Cerritos Complete is one of 10 finalists selected for the Bellwether Award. I was just informed that our **OER initiative *Making College Affordable for Adult Learners Using Online Education Resources*** was also selected as an alternate finalist. We now have two opportunities to win this prestigious honor. I am very proud of our continued work and look forward to presenting both Cerritos Complete and our online program to a national audience. Thank you, **Bob Livingston** for your hard work.

**Energy and Sustainability Award**

The College is the recipient of the 2017 Energy and Sustainability Award for the Science Building Retro-Commissioning Project presented by the Board of Governors. The project involved installing more reliable control sequences on air handlers, saving the campus \$25,000 in energy cost annually. **David Moore** and the **Facilities team** have pushed the envelope to execute our plan to become an environmentally friendly and sustainable campus. We will continue our efforts, and do our part to protect the planet. The [Long Beach Press-Telegram published a story about the award.](#)

**South Bay Workforce Investment Board Award**

The South Bay Workforce Investment Board recognized the College's 18-week training course in Electrical Field Service Technician. The program provides job seekers with an intensive training session in the high-demand field of solar panel development. Over 80% of participants secured jobs after completing the program. Congratulations and thank you to **Jannet Malig, Belle Gomez,** and **Economic Development and Advanced Transportation, Technology & Energy** team for their work to expand job opportunities for students, residents and businesses across the region.

**2017 Recap: Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Program (VITA)**

Cerritos College is a partner institution with the Board of Equalization's Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program. VITA provides free, volunteer tax services to low-income residents who cannot afford to file their annual tax returns. The College received a summary report detailing the state's efforts during the 2017 filing period. According to the findings, VITA volunteers assisted 12,265 taxpayers in filing 24,161 state and federal returns. Cerritos College accounting students volunteered over 140 hours in support of the initiative. The College also supported legislation (AB 795) to promote student training as accountants and tax professionals while adding millions of dollars in vital resources to help California families. Please give a round of applause to our accounting students!

## **Guided Pathways**

The state has allocated \$150 million for California Community Colleges to implement a guided pathway curriculum. The College will receive \$2.5 million over the next five years for implementation. I am proud to say the College is working diligently to develop a plan that incorporates our Associate Degree for Transfer and certificate programs as a pathway for students to align transfer or graduation goals. Thank you, **David Fabish** and the **Guided Pathways Exploratory Committee** for leading our project.

Again, thank you all for the work you do to make the lives of our students better and for making the campus a welcoming place for everyone. Without your commitment, creativity, and passion, we would not be a thriving institution. I hope you enjoy your time with friends and loved ones.

Sincerely,

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

President/Superintendent