

**Dr. Jose Fierro**  
**President's Message**  
**December 14, 2016**

Dear Colleagues:

To say the least, 2016 has proven to be a great year of both accomplishments and challenges. As we near the close of another year, let us look back at what made the year 2016 at Cerritos College successful:

For starters, we officially installed re-elected Board members **Carmen Avalos, Marisa Perez, and Dr. Sandra Salazar**, and welcomed our newest Board member **Martha Camacho-Rodriguez**. We also said good-bye to one of our longest serving Trustees **Bob Arthur** who served the College for 21 years.

I am also happy to report that we filled three critical positions on our management team, including: **Dr. Adriana Flores-Church** as the new Vice President of Human Resources, **Felipe Lopez** our new Vice President of Business Services and **Elizabeth Miller** as the new Dean of Student Services. We are actively searching for a new Vice President of Academic Affairs.

As for accomplishments, we've had record activity and success within our programs:

At the beginning of the year, 24 culinary arts students were hired at \$15 per hour to help prepare dinner for the Golden Globe Awards for the second year in a row. For 2017, students have been asked to return. Under the direction of **Chef Michael Pierini**, our culinary arts program and students have a strong reputation in the industry for their excellent culinary skill. In fact, more than **75%** of the kitchen staff at the Marina del Rey Ritz Carlton are former Cerritos College students.

This year's commencement is probably one of my proudest moments. We awarded 2,600 degrees and certificates making the class of **2016 the largest graduating class** in campus history. It is an incredible feeling to watch the faces of our students shine as they received their degrees and certification. We owe a lot to our talented faculty and staff for helping our students to realize their dreams. Many of our students have transferred to some of the top colleges and universities across the country, including Biola, La Verne University, Loyola Marymount University, University of Maine, Stanford, USC, UCLA, Whittier College, among others. In fact, the College ranked among the top 100 two-year colleges with the highest alumni salaries in the United States.

The College received **\$1.4 million** in grants, including a share of a \$1.5 million grant from the Chancellor's Office to strengthen our CTE programs. The **Foundation awarded \$207,000** in scholarships and contributed \$823,000 in program support in the 2015-16 academic year. The annual Foundation Golf Classic raised nearly \$80,000 for scholarships.

We had some notable student recognitions this year like **Samantha Dawson** who was selected for California First Academic Team and named a 2016 Coca-Cola Community College Academic Team Gold Scholar. **Aima Choudry, Nancy Gomez** and **Julian Ruiz** were named UCI Regents' Scholars.

Athletics had another successful year. **Women's tennis team** won its first dual team state championship, and **Women's track and field team** won its fourth Southern California Championship in the last five years. Over the summer, two former athletes, **Ameer Webb** (200m) and **Ashley Whitney** (discus throw), competed in the Rio 2016 Olympics. The **wrestling team captured a Team Dual State Championship, and women's soccer team won its fifth straight State Championship and named National Champions for the fifth time in a row.**

On the faculty side, Art and Design **Professor Bonnie Barrett** won the Graphic Design USA American Inhouse Design Award for her Faculty and Student Art Exhibit catalog design. Education Technology Professor **Dr. Cynthia Alexander** was named the 2016 Teacher of the Year by the California Association for Postsecondary Educators of the Disabled (CAPED,) and **Dr. John Haas**, assistant professor of history, received the 2016 Southern California Mediation Association Education Foundation Directors Award for his contribution to peace building.

This fall semester, we welcomed 600 high school graduates into the **Cerritos Complete** program. Cerritos Complete is our version of the Promise Program, but our focus is on students' pledge to earn and complete their degrees or certificates on time. Another new student support initiative is the **Accelerated Instruction in Math and English (AIME)** program led by **Frank Mixson and his team**. AIME helps accelerate students' ability to complete their remedial, college-level math and English courses faster. The preliminary data is very encouraging and shows that students are benefiting in a big way.

The College also won the [2016 Digital Learning Innovation Award](#) for the Business Administration Department's Open Education Resources project, which has improved students learning while reducing the cost of textbooks. The project is led by Business Professor **Bob Livingston**.

We would not have been able to accomplish this level of success without the support of our classified/confidential staff and our managers. The Cerritos College classified team works behind the scenes making sure we all have the support needed to perform our jobs at the highest level and ensuring our students receive the best possible service while on our campus. Our management team worked very hard advocating for the needs of their individual areas while keeping in mind the overall mission of the institution. It truly was a team effort.

As you can see from these accomplishments, we have made remarkable progress in enhancing student success this year. Let us celebrate our achievements and look forward to 2017 with much anticipation.

Happy holidays to you and your family, and I hope you enjoy your time away from campus with great company and good food.

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