

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT/SUPERINTENDENT
PRESIDENT'S CAMPUS UPDATES



November 24, 2020

Dear Colleagues,

This year, I know many of us won't be able to see all of our family and loved ones at Thanksgiving. Perhaps you, like me, are reflecting on past Thanksgiving traditions, holiday memories, and the many things you are thankful for. I want to take a moment to share a Thanksgiving memory of mine with you, and I encourage you to share a memory or tradition with our Cerritos College family by "replying all" to this email. Or, I would enjoy it if you reply and share a memory or tradition with me directly, or, simply take a moment to share with a family member, colleague, or friend.

Thanksgiving is a relatively new celebration for me. As many of you know, I grew up in Bogota Colombia. The Thanksgiving tradition is primarily an American holiday, with a few exceptions, and Colombia isn't one of those exceptions. Hence, my first Thanksgiving was nearly a year after my arrival in the United States. People kept asking me what my plans were, and I had not given it much thought because I had to work.

On Thanksgiving, I had a small dinner with friends and went to bed early so that I could take part in a great American tradition. The next morning (which I also thought was Thanksgiving), I woke up at 3:45 am so I could make it to Walmart before heading to work, because this was a chance to buy my very first TV. After fighting the crowds and holding on for dear life, I made it to the back of the store and found my TV. Getting to the front of the store to pay for it was just as exhilarating, and at that point, I believed that people carb-loaded the night before celebrating Thanksgiving in order to have the energy to shop in the morning. I said to myself that I will not be eating light next year--I needed to prepare better for this.

I know many of you are wondering what is worse: that I did not have a TV during my first year in the United States, or that I mistakenly thought we continued Thanksgiving on Friday by running to the nearest store in the early hours of the morning to find the year's best deals. Today, I know that Black Friday comes after the Thanksgiving feast, and that the year's best shopping spree is not necessarily the holiday celebration that everyone talks about. And while I can't exactly remember what was for dinner during my first Thanksgiving, I am sure it was not turkey, gravy, and potatoes like I had seen in the ads. However, I can tell you that lining up to buy my first TV on "Thanksgiving" was a memorable experience.

While this is written in a humorous way, it represents my first memory of Thanksgiving in the US. Over time, I have learned to reflect on the many great things that I am thankful for, and this year will not be the exception. I am thankful to be healthy, and although my family experienced some difficult times due to COVID-19, we have remained strong and supportive of each other, and we know that the future continues to be bright. I am also thankful that our Cerritos College family comes together to serve our students, each other, and our community in this time of need, which ensures a bright future for those whom we serve.

The holidays are the best time of year for connecting with others, and despite this year's limitations, I plan to enjoy this season with you all. Have a Happy Thanksgiving and I look forward to hearing from you.

Jose

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