



Office of the President

May 21, 2022

Dear Colleagues,

We have worked very hard to get to the finish line of this spring semester, and I would like to begin this message by saying thank you. I know that this semester has had its challenges and hardships; believe me when I say that I feel the strain, too. I know that our students also feel the pressure of this semester coming to a close.

But time marches on, and with kindness and support towards one another, we continue to move forward. In this way, we have a lot to be thankful for. I am pleased to share that **despite a significant decline in enrollment, we are slated to graduate more students with AA/AS degrees in a single academic year than ever before.** We anxiously await spring semester grades to see more concrete numbers, but this much we already know: our students are succeeding at higher rates than ever, increasing their upward social mobility, and uplifting the communities we serve. Our students cannot do this without you, our valued faculty, staff, and administrators.

This week has been packed full of in-person ceremonies to celebrate our students. I hope you have had the opportunity to see and hear about the excellent student events your colleagues have organized this year, such as the ASCC Awards Ceremony, Undocugrad Recognition Ceremony, and most recently, the Umoja Rights of Passage/Black Grad Celebration, just to name a few. It is a privilege to be able to see our students and employees in celebration together, and it is something that I will never again take for granted, particularly since these past couple of years prohibited us from celebrating in person.

These events are successful because of the strong collaboration between all our employees—faculty, staff, and administrators—who help our students cross the finish line and then celebrate alongside them. So, I believe that it is fitting that this week we celebrate Classified School Employees Week. At Wednesday's Board meeting, Irlanda Lopez, CSEA President, said it best when she commented that classified employees are an integral part of the success of the college. I would like to respectfully echo her comments to our classified and confidential employees: be proud of the services you provide to our on- and off-campus communities. Thank you for all that you do, and I am looking forward to celebrating our outstanding classified and confidential employees at the Awards Ceremony on Thursday, May 26 at 11:30 a.m. in the Student Center.

With all these things in mind, I feel like this week is one of the most exciting we have had on campus in a very long time, and to top it off, we get to have TWO commencement ceremonies to celebrate both the Class of 2020 and Class of 2022 on yesterday, Friday, May 20, and today Saturday, May 21st. We are expecting over 1,100 students, along with members of their families and support networks, to be on campus this weekend. I know that many of you will attend one or both ceremonies, and I sincerely appreciate you joining the celebration and lending a hand during our students' special day.

I would like to conclude this email on a bit of a procedural note. Miya Walker sent a campus-wide reminder on Tuesday, but I too would like to mention that beginning next week (Monday, May 23), individuals are no longer required to wear face coverings while indoors. While face coverings are not required, individuals are strongly encouraged to wear face coverings while indoors to minimize any potential transmission.

I am looking forward to a productive summer semester, and whether you work during the summer or not, I hope that you are able to take some time to recharge and focus on yourself. Thank you again for making Cerritos College a great place to learn and to work.

Thank you,
Jose

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