



Office of the
President

February 9, 2023

Dear Colleagues,

As we continue to react to the news of Ben Pendleton's passing, we are reminded of the impact a single individual can make throughout their lives. While the loss of a colleague and friend is difficult, it is important to remind ourselves of the people and relationships we have had in our lives that have made an impact and help us grow to become the people we are today. While there is no easy source of comfort, we can remember and reflect on the good things and look forward to carrying on the legacy of those who've departed before us.

The spring semester is off to a positive—and busy—start. I am grateful to see more students returning to our college, both in person and online. This is an indicator that our continuous efforts to be a student-friendly college are paying off. In fact, this semester, our enrollment is increasing at a higher rate than our peer institutions across the state. We are a college of choice because each of you makes the effort to make our students feel welcome, and our world-class faculty continues to provide high-quality instruction that is changing lives. Below I will provide an update on some statewide activities that impact our college. I will also share some goals we aim to achieve this spring semester.

I would like to share that I am looking forward to our [Black History Month](#) event next Wednesday, February 15, with Kenneth A. Brown, Board President of El Camino College. The event will be held at 11:30 am in the Student Center. Trustee Brown is an engaging speaker with a great sense of humor, and he will chat with us about possible ways to **Engineer Our Future through equity, inclusion, and diversity**. Lunch will be provided by our exceptional Cerritos College Culinary Arts program. A big thank you to the Black Excellence Collaborative (BEC) for planning a month full of engaging activities.

I wish I could highlight every one of the fantastic events we have planned in the coming month. Everyone is going above and beyond this semester with a variety of activities, workshops and celebrations. Please remember to scan the [Daily Falcon](#) email to learn more.

A New Legislative Session

Many of our students, trustees and I have been advocating for Cerritos College at the state and national levels this month. We had our work cut out for us, particularly because after the last election, the State of California welcomed 38 newly elected legislators—nearly one-third of the total senators and assembly members. We welcomed several individuals who now represent our district due to the outcome of elections as well as redistricting based on the recent census. It has been great sharing with them the incredible things we are doing at Cerritos, and what makes the meetings particularly powerful is to work alongside our ASCC students for the good of the college; they do a fabulous job sharing about their experiences as college students. We look forward to hearing about the continued efforts of our ASCC student leaders as they head to Washington, DC in March to continue advocacy efforts and engage in our democratic process.

Our Students are Beating the Odds

Our elected officials continue to be impressed with how well our students are thriving despite the myriad of pressures that they face in their daily lives. Just like us, our representatives are concerned

about how their constituents are handling the shift to a world with evolving expectations and unavoidable difficulties. When our local elected officials ask how they can help our students, we as a college are advocating in earnest for additional resources that support our students so they can focus on their education. We know that providing wraparound student support, inside and outside the classroom, translates to student success.

Recent data shows that Cerritos College is reducing the time it takes for students to complete their degrees and certificates. Because every one of you has been working to help students get on their educational path, and stay on the path, with wraparound support services both inside and outside of the classroom, through to completion, our students are responding to these efforts. When we look at students who entered the college as new students in 2018, 25 percent more students finished their degree or certificate in two years, compared to those who entered the college just three years prior. In fact, a higher proportion of our students complete in less time than at comparable institutions.

We should be proud of the numbers, absolutely—but what is truly remarkable is the impact this has on the lives of every student obtaining their degree or transferring in less time than the average community college student. The sooner they complete at Cerritos, the sooner they begin to realize an increase in their earnings potential, the sooner they can move forward into advanced degrees, and the sooner they shift the mindset of their families and communities as a whole.

Keeping our Students on the Path: Learning and Career Pathways

As we know, the campus continues to promote Learning and Career Pathways (LCPs) for our students, whether they plan to transfer, earn an associate degree, or develop new skills for the workforce. As we continue efforts to increase awareness of our LCPs, we will be featuring two per month this semester on the college website and in display cases on campus. In January, we highlighted the [Applied Technology & Skilled Trades](#) and [Exploration & Discovery pathways](#). This month, the spotlight is on [Arts, Humanities and Communication](#) and [Social and Behavioral Sciences pathways](#):

- Students pursuing programs in the Arts, Humanities and Communication LCP develop highly valued transferable skills preparing them for careers related to visual, applied, and performing arts; TV and film; working in the media; journalism; and public sector, non-profit, and advocacy work.
- Programs in the Social and Behavioral Sciences LCP reflect an interest in how societies and people change over time and prepare students for a wide range of careers in which understanding human behavior and/or diverse cultures and societies is an asset.

I encourage you to take a moment to check out the great work of your colleagues in these LCPs. And, as you encounter students for whom these two LCPs may be a fit, please encourage them to connect with their Success Teams at ATST-LCP@cerritos.edu and ED-LCP@cerritos.edu to learn more.

2023-24 Budget Statewide Budget

Governor Newsom released his budget proposal for the 2023-24 fiscal year and the following are some key changes in the proposal compared to the enacted budget for 2022-23:

- The overall state budget would be lower than in 2022-23, decreasing by about 3% to \$297.7 billion, affected by a substantial decline in the share of personal income tax revenues from capital gains.
- One-time funding in the proposal is largely dedicated to student retention and enrollment efforts in the context of statewide enrollment that has dropped by over 16% since the beginning of the pandemic. The \$200 million proposed for that purpose is offset by a proposal to reduce that approximate amount of one-time funding for deferred maintenance included in the 2022-23 budget.
- The 2021 Budget Act extended the Student-Centered Funding Formula's (SCFF) hold harmless provision through 2024-25, under which districts will earn at least their 2017-18 total computational revenue (adjusted by COLA each year). The 2022 Budget Act extended the

revenue protections in a modified form beginning in 2025-26, with a district's 2024-25 funding representing its new "floor." Starting in 2025-26, districts will be funded at their SCFF generated amount that year or their "floor" (2024-25 funding amount), whichever is higher. This revised hold harmless provision will no longer include adjustments to reflect cumulative COLAs over time.

Other 2023-24 Key Budget Highlights include an 8.13% cost-of-living adjustment (COLA), 0.5% enrollment growth (\$28.8 million), 8.13% COLA for select categorical programs and the Adult Education Program (\$92.5 million), a decrease of \$213 million (one-time) for deferred maintenance needs, and \$200 million (one-time) to increase student retention rates and enrollment.

High Hopes in the Spring Semester

We've got high hopes and ambitious goals this semester, and everyone is involved in helping the college achieve success. Two campus-wide initiatives that will have a multi-year impact on the institution are the preparation of our mid-year Accreditation report and the development of a comprehensive plan that will integrate our Educational Master Plan, Technology Master Plan, and Facilities Master Plan.

In previous messages, I have talked about "rocks," or mid-range goals, that Executive Council brings forward each semester related to the different areas on campus (Academic Affairs, Business Services, Human Resources, Student Services, and Office of the President). I want to share a few of these spring goals with you. Several goals are currently being discussed or will be discussed, in shared governance committees. If you have any questions about them, please do not hesitate to reach out to me, to your area vice president, and to your constituent group representatives.

- Develop an EEO plan based on new regulations and format through the Diversity and Equal Employment Opportunity Advisory Committee.
- Fill 85 percent of currently listed positions (this is no small task, as it includes the hiring of 27 full-time faculty and a variety of classified and management positions. Be sure to [check online](#) for opportunities that you may be interested in or to share with friends!)
- Hold a campus-wide town hall on hiring practices in order to integrate system protocols based on feedback for improved customer service.
- Increase summer and fall 2023 semesters' enrollment by 5 percent compared to last year.
- Develop program learning outcomes and institutional learning outcomes assessment plan and implement course student learning outcomes assessment plan.
- Create a class schedule development guide for division deans and department chairs.
- Complete a timeline and prepare a first draft of the Accreditation mid-term report to address Accreditation recommendations and improvement action items (Mid-term report due March 15, 2024).
- Develop and implement practices, data collection, and outreach to improve first-year retention.
- Convert 80 percent of Student Services PDF forms to dynamic forms.
- Launch the RFP process for SEAP funds.
- Prepare the adoption of the tentative 2023-24 budget.
- Focus on established IT priorities to improve our databases, improve data collection, and prepare to move to California Community College Online Education Initiative.
- Plan for hyperflex classrooms to be implemented for the fall 2023 semester.
- Through the Foundation, secure a list of donors, conduct donor assessment, and determine whether to select a consultant to conduct a feasibility study for a major gift or capital campaign.
- Work with the Foundation board to hire a permanent Executive Director by June 30.

The goals above represent a substantial amount of effort that reaches across a number of campus functions. I continue to be amazed and humbled by your commitment to working on projects that ultimately improve the student experience. In particular, the collaboration between the instructional functions, the student services functions, and the business functions (including human resources) is

something that never goes unnoticed by me. One of the things that makes Cerritos College great is how management, faculty, classified, and confidential employees work together to make the impossible possible.

What campus-wide goals are you helping to achieve this semester? I hope you can take a moment to share with me the work that you are up to. Email is a great way to stay connected, but also know that you can always stop by the President's Office to come to visit, or attend the monthly President's Hour in the Quad.

Have a great rest of the week,

Jose L. Fierro, D.V.M., Ph.D.
President/Superintendent
Cerritos College
11110 Alondra Blvd
Norwalk, CA 90650