



March 21, 2023

Dear Colleagues,

It is hard to believe Spring Break is already passed, and we are fast approaching the month of April. I hope that each of you enjoyed a restful break, and if you were on campus, I hope you were able to enjoy a nice three-day weekend. A common theme I hear when I talk with faculty, staff, and students is that things are busy on campus. And I agree, things are busy indeed. When I think about this semester compared to the last couple spring semesters, I continue to be grateful that as a team we have worked through so many challenges, with the core focus being the success of our students. Each of you have been creative in finding ways to serve them through challenging times. Our students appreciate all of your efforts, and I do, too.

March is synonymous with Women's History Month, and Cerritos College has a long-standing tradition of celebrating through a variety of events and activities. A big shout-out goes to Kimberly Rosenfeld and Katie St. John for coordinating these events and keeping us all apprised of the almost daily events. This year's theme is **Providing Healing, Promoting Hope**. If you haven't had the chance, check out their [calendar](#) with the list of all upcoming events.

The [Spring 2023 President's Speaker Series](#) also began this month with a workshop on The Art of Mindfulness. Those who joined us had a great session introducing mindful leadership through simple techniques and practices. I look forward to the remaining two series on [financial planning and self-defense](#).

Our Core Business is Student Success

You may have been one of the randomly selected individuals who received an anonymous survey asking to identify what you feel makes Cerritos College unique. It is no surprise that the most common theme is that we are a student-centered institution. Throughout all departments on our campus, our number one goal is to help support and give opportunities that result in student success. We have established an excellent reputation by looking at the whole student and understanding that achievement and excellence are supported through a firm and secure foundation.

Building that foundation begins with addressing our students' basic needs. I am continually impressed by our employees in the Falcon's Nest and Student Services Division, who repeatedly think outside the box to meet our students where they are at. Throughout this last month, over 400 students received support from Falcon's Nest, almost 5,000 items were distributed through Franco's Market, and 41 students were enrolled in our housing program. While we continue to make great strides helping our students to focus on their studies, more work still needs to be done. We experienced an 80% increase in emergency aid requests, received 48 new housing requests, and more than 50% of our student population reported housing insecurities.

Cerritos College continues to look for ways to expand the functions and services we provide for our students. We recently submitted a statewide application for grant funding to build affordable, on-campus housing, and I am very proud to share that our application ranked #1 in the state. We continue to reach out to our community partners and lobby our legislators to request that the funding be

included in this year's state budget. If approved, we are ready to build an \$80-million student housing project on our campus featuring about 400 beds by 2026.

We are also working to secure more funding for our Metro GoPass program to continue and expand reliable transportation available to our students. We currently have more than 1,000 students using the program, and we received 644 new applications last month alone. We hope to gain the support of our legislators and make this a permanent fixture at Cerritos College.

Preparing For Our Students

We know that the heart of our work is education. Education is the only way to break down the barriers our students face. By reimagining our practices to better fit our students' needs, our students are producing results. More of our students are transferring to four-year institutions, receiving job offers, and gaining hands-on experience for future employment than ever before.

A few examples of these efforts can be found in our Automotive Department that is proving to prepare their students for the workforce, as showcased by two of our students recently obtaining employment at Tesla Motors and Auto Claims Direct. Our esthetician services are now open; students can take clients and earn tips. Our Woodworking Manufacturing Technology Division approved a full-time intensive cohort model for the Furniture Making Certificate Program. Students, funded by the John B. Smith, Jr. scholarship, will be able to earn their certificate in just 27 weeks starting in Fall 2023. I love to hear these success stories and see how our efforts impact our students' lives and the future of our community. Please join me in thanking our faculty for providing our students' with high-quality instruction that is changing lives.

Meeting Our Future Falcons

You may have noticed the large groups of future Falcons visiting our campus over the last month. In addition to our school relations team's continuous tours with elementary and middle schoolers in our district, our Earth Science department recently hosted 120 middle schoolers for an earth science day. Cerritos Complete led a tour of 40 5th graders from Dulles Elementary School. Our K-12 Partnership is expanding to St. Joseph, St. Paul, and Valley Christian High Schools. If you see any of these kids walking around our campus, engage with them and talk with them about the unlimited possibilities of their future. You can inspire our next generation to achieve the unexpected. They are also a lot of fun to chat with!

As some of you know, this year I am serving as the President of the statewide CEO Board. I have been to Sacramento more times than I can count in recent months, and while the role requires me to advocate on behalf of all 116 community colleges on issues such as state funding and legislation, the truth is that in every meeting, I never fail to mention the incredible accomplishments of our management, faculty, classified, and confidential employees to serve our students. In every meeting I attend, people walk away knowing that the core business of Cerritos College is student success. By far, the highlight of these advocacy efforts is running into alumni in places such as the halls of our State Capitol building. Our successful students are the best indicator of the great work you do, and as we continue to push forward, we will see the number of those students continue to rise. Thank you for all you do to turn dreams into reality for our students.

Looking Ahead

Over the past several years, faculty, staff, and managers made a tremendous effort to improve student outcomes. Our students are putting in the work in the classroom, and the data proves it. As a whole, Cerritos College students are now performing at the national average levels, which was an incredibly daunting task when we began this work together nearly eight years ago. As an institution, we are ready to strive for the next level of student achievement.

In the next few weeks, several campus leaders, including myself, will be presenting data on where we

started, what we've accomplished, and what the future can look like in terms of student success. Together, we will be setting new targets to improve completion rates across all ethnicity groups. I am confident that you will be excited when looking at the data—not just because we've come so far as an institution, but because of our potential to do even more for our students and the communities we serve.

Have a great rest of the week,

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