



September 5, 2023

Dear Colleagues,

Thank you to all who attended last week's Convocation. It was great to celebrate with our over 300 attendees the accomplishments our Cerritos team has achieved over the 2022-2023 academic year. We should all be very proud of the work we have completed and generating new ways to support our students' success. As we begin our efforts to reach our main goal over the next five years, I encourage you to visit this year's [Convocation web page](#) to view the presentation and watch our new and promoted employees and accomplishments videos.

Last Thursday, I highlighted community colleges' incredible impact on an individual's life. One example is [Reyna Gomez Tippetts](#), who, after immigrating to the United States, obtained a job as a custodian at a local community college and eventually enrolled. This created a pathway for her to earn three degrees; today, she serves as dean of the very college where it all started. Her story reminds us that our efforts remove barriers and establish the track for our students to achieve upward social and economic mobility.

Over the next five years, Cerritos College will focus on creating increased value for more of our students, ensuring they graduate with degrees and certificates that prepare them for whatever comes next in their lives. We create value by offering the best programs and reducing time to completion. Together, we developed three goals to measure and assess whether our efforts are leading to more students achieving their goals in less time.

1. **The Main Goal: Graduate 50% of our students within no more than five years**
2. Leading Indicator: Achieve more than 75% of our first-time students earning 15+ degree-applicable units by the end of their second year.
3. Leading Indicator: Achieve over 50% of our first-time students earning all attempted credits in their first five courses.

Josh Wyner, Founder and Executive Director of the College Excellence Program, Aspen Institute, also spoke with us during Convocation about how excellent community colleges deliver value. I encourage you to take some time to review the [slides](#) he shared. We received a lot of positive feedback about Josh's overall message and the data he provided to demonstrate a student outcomes framework based on Success in College, Success After Graduating, and Equitable Access and Success. We will be hosting follow-up workshops to explore these concepts in greater detail, so stay tuned.

During Convocation, I also had the opportunity to share the exciting news that **Cerritos College will receive \$68 million through an Affordable Student Housing Grant from the State of California**. This was the last remaining piece to enable us to construct an \$80-million student

housing project. This is yet another way Cerritos College will increase student support services for our community so our students can complete their education.

I want to thank everyone across campus for their letters of support to secure this state funding. Our advocacy and evidence of success in providing student housing was crucial in convincing Sacramento that community colleges are ready and able to provide housing developments.

I hope you had a wonderful time at Convocation and were able to enjoy The Habit food truck and fantastic music by our Commercial Music Ensemble. A special thanks to all our employees and students who helped make last week's event spectacular. Please join me in thanking them for their collective efforts in making this year's Convocation the best yet:

Amber Douglas	Catherine Lu	Denise Marshall	Richard Crother
Andrea Wittig	Cheryl Thury	Facilities Team	Sarah Pirtle
Andrew Maz	Christy Martinez	Frank Vega	Student Ambassadors
Aya Aoki	Commercial Music Ensemble	Kelly Kwan	Wendy Thomas
Cameron Ferre	Dave Ward	Linda Kaufman	

Thank you again for joining us at The Cerritos 500 and for all the work you do. Don't forget to join us at our next event, the blue carpet premiere of our episode on The College Tour on September 19 in the Performing Arts Center starting at 5:30 p.m. Hope to see you all there.

Thank you,

Jose

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