Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion at Cerritos College is a Model for the State

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: March 5, 2018

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NORWALK, Calif. – March 5, 2018 – At Cerritos College, diversity and inclusion is a core value that is integrated into the fabric of campus life. The College's diversity efforts in hiring, strategic planning, and campus culture have tripled the number of diverse employees over three years. Approximately 65 percent of the College's classified staff represent a diverse group.

In cultivating a culture of respect, the College's Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Plan and Diversity Plan are essential to an inclusive and open campus. The overarching goals of these plans are part of a robust strategy to include the values of diversity, equity and community, and campus climate. Recruitment and retention, knowledge of diverse cultures, lifestyles and beliefs, training and professional development, participation in community events, and cultural competency, are also part of the campus' strategy.

The College's dedication to inclusion led to the creation of a Diversity and Equal Employment Opportunity Advisory Committee that provides recommendations about diversity strategies. The campus has also implemented support groups that meet the needs of diverse communities. The College's Safe Zone Ally Program supports LGBTQI groups, the VetNet Ally program supports veterans on campus, and the AB 540 Ally Program supports undocumented students. The District also honors a wide variety of national celebrations, including Black History Month, Women's History Month, Hispanic Heritage Month, among others.

Continued learning and training about diversity and inclusion is also an essential part of the College's professional development initiatives. Employees can also earn a Diversity Certificate with the completion of courses such as Culture of Respect, Culturally Responsive Teaching/Implicit Bias, among others. The College continues to offer customized trainings and workshops for students, faculty, and staff, and various events that celebrate diversity.

"We strive to maintain a diverse learning environment and workplace for all, regardless of their immigration status, social economic background, religion, ethnicity, gender, and sexual orientation. Cerritos College is committed to maintaining an academic and work environment that is free of discrimination and sexual harassment," said Zurich Lewis, president, Cerritos College Board of Trustees.

"As a campus, we believe diversity makes us stronger and brings cultures together. *If colleges and institutions want to succeed, building strong, diverse teams made up of people from different backgrounds and experiences is critical. With the country's changing demographics, it is past the time to embrace diversity and inclusion as an institutional strength rather than something we simply have to do. There is clear data that says diverse teams are stronger, which makes candidates from different backgrounds more competitive,"* said Dr. Jose Fierro, president/superintendent, Cerritos College.

About Cerritos College: *Cerritos College serves as a comprehensive community college for southeastern Los Angeles County. Communities within the college's district include Artesia, Bellflower, Cerritos, Downey, Hawaiian Gardens, La Mirada, Norwalk, and portions of Bell Gardens, Lakewood, Long Beach, Santa Fe Springs and South Gate. Cerritos College offers degrees and certificates in more than 180 areas of study in nine divisions. Annually, more than 1,200 students successfully complete their course of studies, and enrollment currently averages 23,000 students. Visit Cerritos College online at http://www.cerritos.edu/.*

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