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News Release

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Cerritos College Trustee Marisa Perez Honored with 2018 Student Equity Award

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NORWALK, Calif. – November 30, 2018 – In a joint effort, Campaign for College Opportunity and the National Organization of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials (NALEO) honored Cerritos College Board member Marisa Perez with the 2018 Champion of Equity Award. Trustee Perez received the award at the Community College League of California's Annual Convention.



Cindia Valesco, Linda Vasquez, Dr. Jose Fierro, and Marisa Perez (l-r)

Trustee Perez' efforts to improve equity is part of the Cerritos College Board of Trustees' leadership strategy to advance student success. The Board has strongly supported campus, state, and federal policies that increase student achievement for first-generation and underrepresented students. The Board funded Cerritos Complete before it became the College's official California Promise Program, dedicating \$250,000 annually to provide students in the District with their first year of college free. The Board also supported state legislation to implement the use of evidence-based assessment testing that allows colleges to use multiple measures to determine a student's placement in college courses, in part by considering student transcripts. The Board endorsed other student-centered legislation, including California's new funding formula for community colleges, access to affordable transportation, student hunger, low-cost/digital textbooks, among other key bills.

Trustee Perez has served on the Board of Trustees for six years where she was previously appointed president and vice president. Trustee Perez represents Area #4, including Bellflower, Cerritos, Hawaiian Gardens, Lakewood, and Long Beach. She is an active member of NALEO, works closely with Esther Lindstrom Elementary School PTA, and is a member of the School Site Committee. Trustee Perez currently serves as a board consultant to the South Coast Air Quality Management District.

"We need institutions that are student-ready, and willing to meet them where they are and do everything they can to eliminate institutional barriers to success. Trustee Perez represents this commitment and more. She has not only stood behind bold reforms to fix the broken remedial education system and a new community college funding formula that prioritizes both access and success, but she works in partnership with her colleagues and college president to do the hard work. Her unwavering commitment to student success and racial equity is a shining example of the type of trustee leadership our schools need," said Linda Vasquez, Senior Public Affairs Director, Campaign for College Opportunity.

"The success of Latino and underrepresented students is intrinsically tied to the future success of our nation," stated Cindia Velasco, Deputy Director of Constituency Services-Higher Education, National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials (NALEO) Educational Fund. "During her six years on the Cerritos College Board of Trustees, Trustee Perez has worked tirelessly to help our nation's economy grow by removing institutional barriers to higher education so that all students are able to thrive in college. Her steadfast leadership and deep commitment to closing the achievement gap has allowed thousands of Latino and underrepresented students throughout the Cerritos area to achieve their dreams of higher education. We applaud Trustee Perez for her diligent work in this arena and look forward to continuing to work with her and the thousands of Latino policymakers across the country who are making a difference in their communities," continued Velasco.

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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