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News Release



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Cerritos College Employees Receive Innovation Excellence Award

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NORWALK, Calif. – April 29, 2019 – Faculty and staff at Cerritos College were selected for the prestigious 2018 John & Suanne Roueche Excellence Award by the League for Innovation in Community Colleges. The awardees include Professor Froylan Cabuto, Dr. Valyncia Raphael, and Amber Dofner. The annual, national award annually celebrates outstanding contributions and leadership by community college faculty and staff.



Figure 1 Dr. Jose Fierro, Dr. Valyncia Raphael, Amber Dofner, and Froylan Cabuto

Spanish Professor Froylan Cabuto was recognized for his outstanding Spanish-language stage performance chronicling the life of famed Mexican artist and activist Frida Kahlo. Professor Cabuto participated in a yearlong sabbatical to study Frida Kahlo where he later transformed his research into two original, well-crafted stage productions titled *Frida Kahlo: Queen of Selfies*. Professor Cabuto wrote, produced, and directed the performances that featured his original music compositions. The College is planning for a third presentation focusing on the history and legacy of Frida Kahlo this spring semester.

Dr. Valyncia Raphael was selected for her commitment and tireless efforts to diversity, equity, and inclusion. Her leadership brought awareness to campus needs for spreading equity mindedness information and compliance trainings and resources. Dr. Raphael has been instrumental at building bridges across campus to unify inclusion efforts. Recently, she coordinated the creation of a diversity directory. The directory is a reference that inventories all of the College's equity, diversity, and inclusion related programs, services, resources and personnel.

Ms. Amber Dofner was selected for her contribution to equity and inclusion. Ms. Dofner, Program Facilitator for Student Equity, Cross Culture, and Title IX Resources, collaborated with Human Resources (Title IX) to create Pregnant Scholars Expecting Academic Success (Pregnant SEAS). The program provides students with workshops and one-on-one consultations about pregnancy rights, lactation rights and education, student resources, academic accommodations, and more. To date, Pregnant SEAS has served 15 students. The program has provided these students with additional resources on how to request support through all stages of pregnancy and their return to campus to ensure they remain successful in class.

"Our employees are the most valuable assets we have to support student success and enrich our campus," said Dr. Jose L. Fierro, president/superintendent, Cerritos College. "We

are always in search of opportunities to recognize the contributions of our outstanding faculty and staff whose dedication to Cerritos College is unmatched.”

The League for Innovation in the Community College is an international nonprofit organization with a mission to cultivate innovation in the community college environment.

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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