



Cerritos College
Building Futures Through Learning



News Release

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Cerritos College Begins Spring Semester with Look at its Best 2019 Moments

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NORWALK, Calif. – January 13, 2020 - 2019 signaled the end of an era and highlighted another successful year for Cerritos College.

The College honored its **largest graduating class in the campus' history for the fourth consecutive year**. More than **5,000 students received degrees and certificates**. The Class of 2019 surpassed the school's previous record-breaking number of degrees and certificates by almost 1,500 awards. The College also saw a 25 percent increase in awards to students who earned an Associate Degree for Transfer (AA-T/AS-T) from 2018 to 2019, with more than **1,300 degrees** awarded. Since its inception in 2012, more than 5,700 students have earned AA-T/AS-T degrees and transferred to the California State University system.

The College also began the year by covering two years of tuition for **1,800** local high school students through its **California Promise Program Cerritos Complete**. The program increased its one year of free tuition to two years, serving over 2,500 participants, to date.

Cerritos College students had an exciting year. The College hosted its first **NASA on Campus** event through its NASA Community College Aerospace Scholars (NCAS) partnership to help underserved students flourish in STEM-related education. Thirty-eight students were selected from 496 community college students across the U.S. Cerritos College is one of six campuses piloting the NCAS model. Additionally, the College Media Association named **WPMD**, the campus' student-run radio station, **Two-Year Radio Station of the Year**. WPMD's *Un Poquito Latino* was also named America's Best Foreign Language College Radio Program. In 2018, the station was designated America's Best Community College Radio Station by Intercollegiate Broadcasting System. WPMD can be heard on 1700 AM and streaming worldwide via TuneIn, Streema, and Radio Shaker.

Cerritos College faculty received distinguished honors during the year. ESL Instructor Lee Anne McIlroy was selected as an English Language Fellow in Tanzania by the U.S. Department of State. Likewise, Psychology Assistant Professor Dr. Jaclyn Ronquillo received an Early Career Psychologist Award from the American Psychological Association.

2019 marked a year of unprecedented giving from donors and more than **\$835,000** in student scholarships awarded.

The *Los Angeles Times* featured a **\$2.3-million dollar estate gift** for woodworking scholarships from late-alumnus John B. Smith, Jr. The College also renamed its Student Center **Bhupesh Parikh Student Hall** after donors **Bhupesh and Kumud Parikh** pledged a **\$150,000** gift toward student scholarships. The **Teacher TRAC** program received more than **\$1 million** dollars in donations to prepare future educators, and the math department received **\$90,000** in honor of former math instructor, the-late Rick Sterling toward scholarships. Lastly, the new Performing Arts Center broke ground with a **\$500,000** planned gift from anonymous donors.

The College boosted its commitment to its global education efforts. Seventeen students participated in the **2019 Taiwan Experience Education Program**. Students served as teacher's aides and taught English at Taipei City elementary schools and took courses offered by Taipei University. Twenty-six students also traveled to study art and literature in a new pilot program in **Florence, Italy**. Trips to **Costa Rica** and **London** are scheduled for the summer.

"Cerritos College made a lot of exciting progress toward student success in 2019. As we start a new decade, we have extraordinary opportunities to expand our ability to better serve the community and students. For 2020, we will keep our focus on meeting the basic needs of our students, including ways to tackle student homelessness and food insecurity; and nurturing a campus environment that spurs innovation," said Dr. Jose Fierro, president/superintendent, Cerritos College.

Take a look at more of Cerritos College's best moments: www.cerritos.edu

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 <https://www.cerritos.edu/>.*

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