



Cerritos College
Building Futures Through Learning

News Release



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Teacher TRAC Partners with Columbia Memorial Space Center to Prepare Future STEM Educators

Program receives a \$275,000 grant from the National Science Foundation

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NORWALK, Calif. – June 22, 2020 – Cerritos College's [Teacher TRAC](#) program, in partnership with the Columbia Memorial Space Center, received \$274,583 in grants from the National Science Foundation for its new BE-STELLAR program. The program will prepare underserved college students to become STEM educators.

California's teacher shortage is acute, especially in high school STEM areas. There is also a widening diversity gap, a disconnect between faculty and student demographics. To address these issues, Cerritos College has partnered with the Columbia Memorial Space Center (CMSC) to build pathways to STEM teaching careers through the new BE-STELLAR program. BE-STELLAR offers mentoring and experiential learning to future STEM teachers through paid internships at the Space Center and STEM faculty mentorships. While developed primarily for Latinx students in order to address the regional diversity gap, the program is open to all Cerritos College students.

"We are excited for this opportunity to partner with Cerritos College to help empower students in becoming exceptional educators who will one day continue to shape the world of STEM education," said Downey Mayor Blanca Pacheco. "Our Columbia Memorial Space Center thrives in providing innovative learning opportunities for all students, while strengthening pathways to careers in science, technology, engineering and math."

"This grant will help our aspiring educators," said Dr. Jose Fierro, president/superintendent, Cerritos College. "In our service area, the teacher-student demographic gap is most severe for the Latinx population. The grant and our new BE-STELLAR program will help prepare more qualified STEM educators, increase student achievement in K-12 math and science, and improve career opportunities for minority students in our area."

The award-winning Teacher TRAC program celebrated its 20th year of preparing students to become highly qualified K-12 teachers this year. The program has provided more than 2,000 students with a seamless transition to earning a bachelor's degree and teaching credential at universities including

California State University, Long Beach. To date Teacher TRAC has trained more than 800 teachers who work across Southern California and nationally, and has regional partnerships with five districts and 44 schools.

Cerritos College was aided in the preparation of this grant by KickStarter, a technical assistance program that prepares and positions community college Hispanic-serving institutions to compete successfully for federal funds with focus on student recruitment and retention in STEM fields.

For more information about Teacher TRAC or the BE-STELLAR program, visit www.teachertrac.com, or call (562) 860-2451 ext. 2212.

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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