

The Cerritos College Board of Trustees Extends President Fierro's Employment Through 2026

Dr. Fierro becomes the campus's second longest-serving president

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: June 13, 2022

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NORWALK, Calif. – June 13, 2022 – At its June 8 meeting, the Board of Trustees unanimously voted to extend **Dr. Jose Fierro's** employment contract as president/superintendent from **June 30, 2025**, to **June 30, 2026**. As President Fierro concludes his seventh year at Cerritos College, he becomes the second longest-serving president in the campus' history, second only to Dr. Wilford Michael who served 13 years from 1973 to 1986.



"Under Dr. Fierro's administration, the College has made significant progress in advancing student-centered policies and innovative programs that have resulted in increased graduation and completion rates. The Board is unanimously behind the extension to his contract. We have deep confidence in his leadership, continued investment in student success, campus-wide vision, and relationship-building within the communities we serve," said James Cody Birkey, president of the Cerritos College Board of Trustees. "We are very excited for the next four years with Dr. Fierro, working alongside him to support our students, faculty, and staff, and building this institution—inside and out—into one of Southeast LA's most transformative assets."

Dr. Fierro joined Cerritos College as the President/Superintendent in 2015. Under his leadership, faculty, staff, and managers have worked collaboratively, resulting in **record-breaking graduation and completion rates** over seven consecutive years. Dr. Fierro continues to be an enthusiastic champion of the College's efforts to increase educational access and success for underserved students through holistic student support services and high academic rigor.

He initiated efforts with faculty and staff to develop **Cerritos Complete**, the campus' official California College Promise program that provides two years of free tuition and access to college for high school seniors. Cerritos Complete has a proven track record for increasing success rates among students and won the 2018 Examples of *Excelencia* Award. The program was also named a national **top 10 finalist** for the prestigious Bellwether Award in 2018 for this innovative approach to student access and equity.

Dr. Fierro is also a strong advocate for supporting students' basic needs that ensure their educational success. In 2020, the College opened **The Village**, California's **first community college housing project exclusively for homeless students**. Amidst the pandemic, the College distributed **\$1.3 million** from the Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund (HEERF) to **forgive 2,400 unpaid student accounts** from summer 2020 through fall 2021. The campus also provides emergency aid, grocery cards, and laptop/Wi-Fi assistance to help students continue their education through challenging times.

In March 2022, the College launched its new **Metro GoPass** program for all students and opened **The Falcon's Nest**, a network of resources that supports students, including a free campus food pantry modeled after Trader Joe's with an assortment of healthy, fresh food and vegetables. The Falcon's Nest also offers clothing, hygiene support, emergency aid resources, and housing resources.

Dr. Fierro's leadership on higher education issues on diversity, student-centered policies, and online innovation extends beyond Cerritos College. He currently serves as **President of the National Community College Hispanic Council (NCCHC)** and **President of the California Association of Latino Community College Trustees and Administrators (CALCCTA) Board**. He will also become **President of the California Community Colleges (CEOCCC) Board** for the 2022-23 school year. Dr. Fierro is also on the governing boards of Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education Alliance Executive Committee, Racial Equity and Inclusive Excellence (REIE) Taskforce, Los Angeles Regional Consortium Governance Council, Coast Plaza Hospital Board of Directors in Norwalk, and the National Association of Community College Teachers Executive Board (NACCTEP). Dr. Fierro is also a **2020-2021 Aspen Presidential Fellow** and a **2017 Wheelhouse Fellow**.

"I am grateful and incredibly humbled to have the Board's support and confidence throughout my tenure as president of Cerritos College. Our accomplishments would not be possible without the tireless work of the faculty who provide an excellent education to our students, and for that, I am grateful to each of them. I am also thankful for our classified, confidential, and management teams and the Cerritos College community at large who share the same vision for helping our students to realize their goals and dreams. I look forward to more years working with all of you finding innovative ways to meet and exceed the needs of our students and community," said Dr. Fierro.

For more information about Dr. Fierro and Cerritos College visit 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. Enrollment currently averages 21,000 students. Visit Cerritos College online at <http://www.cerritos.edu>.*

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