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Cerritos College to Offer Affordable Bachelor's Degree in Dental Hygiene for Less Than \$11K

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NORWALK, Calif. – May 31, 2023 – The California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office officially approved a new Bachelor of Science degree program in [Dental Hygiene at Cerritos College](#). The new bachelor's degree program will allow students to earn a four-year degree for less than \$11,000 – a fraction of the tuition at a four-year university, helping students obtain an advanced degree with little to no college debt and increasing the communities' social and upwards mobility.

The District has offered an Associate of Science degree in Dental Hygiene for 50 years, earning a reputation for excellence and academic rigor as students boast a 100 percent passage rate on state exams in recent years. Students pursuing the new Bachelor's Degree of Science in Dental Hygiene only need to complete nine additional upper-division general education credits to earn a four-year degree. In 2018, the Dental Hygiene program was awarded California Community College's [Strong Workforce Gold Star](#) recognition for advancing the social mobility of its students and allowing graduates to earn a higher income.

"With the approval of the Dental Hygiene Baccalaureate degree program, we are paving the way for a brighter future and ensuring our students have the tools they need to excel in their chosen profession," said Dr. Shin Liu, president of the Cerritos College Board of Trustees. "The Board applauds the Dental Hygiene and Health Occupations faculty and staff for their tireless efforts, expertise, and commitment to the success of our students."

"The bachelor's degree in dental hygiene puts us one step forward to our goal of closing equity gaps in education," said Dr. Jose Fierro, president/superintendent at Cerritos College. "With our dedicated faculty leading the way, we are opening up new horizons and expanding opportunities for our students in the dental hygiene field. This program will equip our students with advanced knowledge and skills, positioning them for career success and beyond."

The California Community College Baccalaureate Degree Program allows for an expansion of up to 30 new bachelor's degree programs at community colleges each year. All California Community College bachelor's degree options are exclusive to the system and do not duplicate degrees offered at California State University or University of California campuses.

"This is all about increasing opportunities for our students and ensuring they access more affordable educational opportunities. Across the state, there is a need for more qualified dental hygienists and dental hygiene faculty in communities like ours. By offering a bachelor's degree to students who are willing to take on such a rigorous training program, we can provide more highly trained practitioners and faculty who are ready and excited for the opportunity to serve our community," said Dr. Elizabeth Riley, dean of health occupations at Cerritos College.

To meet industry demands, the District is also investing substantial resources into renovating its Health Sciences facility where the program will be housed. This expansion will improve the student learning environment and provide faculty with a modern academic teaching space.

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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