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## Dr. Mercedes Gutierrez honored for her leadership in education

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**NORWALK, Calif. – October 30, 2023** – Cerritos College's Vice President of Human Resources/Assistant Superintendent Mercedes Gutierrez, Ed.D., received the 2023 Distinguished Alumni Award for the College of Education and Integrated Studies from California State Polytechnic University, Pomona on October 21. Dr. Gutierrez was among the first cohort of the doctoral program in educational leadership at Cal Poly Pomona.

The Cal Poly Pomona Alumni Association presents the Distinguished Alumni Award to honor outstanding achievement in a profession, service to the community, or service to Cal Poly Pomona.

Dr. Gutierrez joined Cerritos College in 2022 with a wealth of experience in human resources management in the public education sector. Immediately after her arrival, Dr. Gutierrez helped the district successfully reach agreements with the faculty and classified unions by collaborating to seek resolution and building productive partnerships throughout the bargaining process. She has also led the campus efforts to embrace a culture of diversity, equity, and inclusion through guest speakers and special events. She frequently returns to Cal Poly Pomona to give lectures to first-year students and has taught in the doctoral program.

"My personal and professional journey allows me to ground myself in the mission of helping others," said Dr. Gutierrez. "Staying motivated when I felt like giving up was difficult, yet having a support system through mentors, teachers, and loved ones has been important to my pathway at various life stages. The award represents allowing others with similar backgrounds to understand that adversity can be overcome."

"Since she joined us last summer, Dr. Gutierrez has demonstrated her depth of experience and knowledge in human resources, including employee relations, professional development, negotiations, and recruitment," said Cerritos College President/Superintendent Dr. Jose Fierro. "This award is a testament to her work of empowering every individual on campus to reach their full potential in support of our diverse campus community."



**Dr. Mercedes Gutierrez with the award**

**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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