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The Cerritos College Foundation presents new Automotive Technology Technician Excellence Award

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Media Contact: [Aya Aoki](#); Public Affairs

NORWALK, Calif. – June 25, 2024 – The Cerritos College Foundation presented the newly established Automotive Technology Technician Excellence Award to Eric Lopez on June 11.

Eric, currently participating in an apprenticeship at Simpson Cadillac Buick GMC, is a dedicated and successful student who balances his work and military training as a reserve Marine while still excelling in class. Eric received a 190-piece tool set valued at nearly \$3,000.

The endowed award was established this year by Dr. Jim Lancaster, vice chancellor of Workforce and Economic Development at the Los Angeles Community College District and alumnus of the Cerritos College Automotive Technology Program, to recognize an outstanding automotive technology student at Cerritos College annually.



Bob Smith, Dr. Jim Lancaster, Eric Lopez, Joe Mulleary, Dr. Jose Fierro (l-r)

Over 30 years ago, Dr. Lancaster didn't have a career plan when he started college. At a friend's suggestion, he enrolled in the Cerritos College General Motors Automotive Service Educational Program (ASEP). After completing the program, Dr. Lancaster became a master Chevrolet technician, lifting himself out of poverty. He later pursued higher education and eventually became an instructor, dean, vice president, and vice chancellor. This year, Dr. Lancaster returned to the automotive program to establish an endowed award recognizing the top student in the program. "I want to encourage students to pursue leadership roles in the automotive industry with this award," he said.

Cerritos College's [Auto Technology Program](#) provides students with hands-on technical skills. It is a nationally authorized training site for GM, Ford, Chrysler, and import vehicles. The college also hosts an Advanced Transportation and Logistics program, one of 10 centers in California. The program

advances the workforce in the rapidly developing, technology-driven transportation and energy industries while improving the environment and stimulating the economy.

About the Cerritos College Foundation: *The Cerritos College Foundation, a non-profit organization, serves as a charitable vehicle for the community, individuals, and alumni to assist with financial support of Cerritos College beyond that which state funding supports. Visit the Foundation online at www.CerritosCF.org.*

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 nearly 300 degree and certificate programs in nine divisions. Annually, more than 5,000 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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