Dear Colleagues,

I am most pleased to welcome you to spring 2009 at Citrus College. Now that I have completed my first semester at Citrus College, I am even more convinced of the special, caring community of faculty, staff, and students that you are. As I begin the spring semester, I look forward to the opportunity to get to know you even more. This semester offers all of us a new start with opportunities to engage with students and our colleagues, develop innovative ideas and perspectives, and embrace new challenges. I hope you will bring your own renewed sense of enthusiasm to the many tasks that lie before us in the weeks ahead.

We concluded a very busy fall semester with numerous accomplishments and progress in many areas, including advancing our Strategic Plan, college priorities, and board goals. We also provided high-quality instruction and a variety of support services to our rapidly-growing student body.

In working to achieve the goals of our Strategic Plan, the College Matriculation Committee approved moving to a "mandatory" orientation in order to provide a more comprehensive and effective orientation for new students. To continue to define and advise faculty and staff on Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs), a campus-wide presentation was made during Convocation on the connections between SLOs and accreditation, and a second successful SLOs event was held, "Marathon II: Son of Extravaganza." The college also continued promoting fiscal transparency through increased access to information, training workshops for staff, and a presentation on the college budget at a special forum in October. We furthered the communications component of our Strategic Plan to "promote a culture that encourages enlightening and empowering communication," through our collegial work on the accreditation self-study; our collaborative efforts to address mid-year budget reductions; and increased communications campus-wide. In addition, the newly-organized Faculty Learning Institute presented fall workshops on "Reaching and Teaching the iPod Generation" and "Using Blackboard for Inspiration" and held the first-ever Campus Book Event featuring The Last Lecture by Dr. Randy Pausch.
Updating board policies is both a Citrus College Governing Board goal and a college priority for 2008-2009, and the board has taken a very proactive approach. In September, a board subcommittee met with a consultant from the Community College League of California who provided them with a variety of policy information and guidelines. The revision process began in October, and currently the board has revised and approved 33 policies. Our college committees and constituent groups will be busy this spring as we continue the process to review and update our board policies.

In October, Citrus was awarded a two-year Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) grant from the U.S. Department of Education. This grant, in the amount of $3,430,976, will provide funds to increase the number and success of both Hispanic and other under-represented students in STEM-science, technology, engineering, and math-majors. In addition, Citrus became a partner in a University of La Verne (ULV) STEM grant, to develop STEM transfer opportunities for Citrus students who transfer to ULV. This past fall, we were also pleased to be awarded $100,000 from the Wal-Mart Foundation to support the development of new and existing programs and services for our veteran students. With this funding, we will launch a special office for veterans' services.

The outlook for the spring semester indicates that we will continue to be very busy. The first drafts of the accreditation self-study are under review and will soon be assigned for cross-editing by co-chair teams. In March, the second drafts will be posted online for review and comment by the entire campus community. We will specifically ask all constituent groups to review the self-study and provide feedback. The report is scheduled to go to the Steering Committee in May and then to the Board of Trustees for a first reading in June. The visiting team is scheduled to be on campus October 13-15, 2009, and we will be making arrangements for a team room filled with evidence.

Mandatory training for emergency preparedness took place throughout the fall and winter, and additional training sessions are scheduled for the spring semester. These include a training designed to introduce participants to the concepts and principles of the National Response Framework requirements; a workshop entitled, "Preparation through Group Dynamics Action Planning Session," a SEMS Executive Training for all senior management, including the Board of Trustees; and several Incident Command System training sessions.

I am pleased to report that the development of the new Citrus College Master Plan is moving forward as scheduled. The Master Plan Leadership Team first met in the fall and identified the steps necessary for creation of a new master plan and established a timeline. A Master Plan Task Force, which included members from all constituent groups, met and conducted a S.W.O.T.-strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats-analysis. The Leadership Team met again in January and made the decision to expand the existing intranet website and populate it with committee documents. Plans are underway for an all-campus Master Plan workshop to be held on Flex Day, February 17th and for a community educational forum on the future directions of Citrus College.

Our Measure G construction projects are progressing well, and this spring we will install irrigation and landscaping south of the IT building and around the central plant. Construction on
the Field House and Concession Building continues, with project completion slated for March. The steel in the Student Services building is scheduled to begin going up in the middle of February, with project completion anticipated in fall 2010. Occupancy of the first phase of the Vocational Technology Building is scheduled to begin this spring.

The state budget continues to be one of our most pressing concerns. Until we have a state budget that is passed and signed into law, we can only tentatively plan as a college. To address the inevitable mid-year reductions and additional cuts that are being called for in the 2009-10 budget, Citrus has made several reductions in our local budget.

I thank you for all of your good work, your spirit and enthusiasm, and the care and dedication you consistently demonstrate toward our students. As we begin this spring semester, I know that we look forward to enabling many students to achieve their educational goals. Whether those goals are to obtain a certificate or a degree, to transfer to a 4-year institution or to train or retrain for the workforce—all will contribute to a healthier economy and better lives.

Once again, welcome to the spring 2009 semester!

Sincerely,

Geraldine M. Perri, Ph.D.
Superintendent/President