August 28, 2009

Dear Colleagues:

As summer draws to a close, it is with much enthusiasm and confidence that I welcome you back to the 2009-2010 academic year-enthusiasm for the work we do in helping thousands of students achieve their goals—and confidence in you, the dedicated members of our Citrus College community who make it all happen.

At the beginning of each year, we welcome our new and returning students with excitement and optimism. However, this year in particular I would like to offer a special welcome to our shared governance leadership. With a struggling economy and a less-than-optimistic state budget forecast, your leadership skills and willingness to collaborate, share ideas, and work together has never been more important.

The momentum from a busy spring semester continued into a very busy summer, especially in the area of campus construction. While we worked toward completion and occupancy of the Field House, the Gate House, and the first phase of the Vocational Technology Building, our impressive Student Services Building continued to evolve. In an effort to improve traffic flow on and around campus, we installed beautiful new concrete walkways in the campus mall; new campus signage; and an upgraded traffic signal on Citrus Avenue. The Professional Center and Tech C were reroofed, and the Security Building project was bid and will soon be underway.

I am pleased to direct you to our finished "Accreditation Self Study," which has been posted on the college website. It represents the work of over 150 faculty members, staff, students, administrators, and board members. We believe it provides a comprehensive, honest, and thorough portrait of our institution. Thank you to all those who devoted many hours to achieve this important milestone! In addition, I am happy to report that our "Fact Book" and "Organization and Governance Handbook" are also available online. Our Accreditation site visit will take place the week of October 12th, and I hope you will extend a warm "Citrus Welcome" to the Accreditation team while they are here.

If you followed the budget impasse over the summer, you are aware of the significant cutbacks to community colleges statewide and the resulting loss of classes and services. In addition, higher student fees were mandated, putting the dream of a college education just that much
further from the grasp of many students who are struggling financially. We anticipate this will be a year of very high demand and high persistence rates for those students fortunate enough to be enrolled-and disappointment and frustration for those who are not.

In the weeks ahead we will continue working on board goals, which include Student and Institutional Success; Student Learning Outcomes and Assessment; Fiscal Transparency and Stability; and Communication and Community and Governmental Relations. We will also continue to advance our Strategic Plan, Educational Master Plan, Program Review, Technology Plan, and revision of Board Policies. I am confident, that with your help, we will be able to look back on a very successful 2009-2010 academic year and recall the timeless words of Charles Dickens, "It was the best of times, it was the worst of times."

Welcome back. We are looking forward to a great year!

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