It is my very great pleasure to welcome you to the spring 2010 semester at Citrus College with some wonderful news-on February 3, 2010, we received notification that the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges has taken action to reaffirm the accreditation of Citrus College!

As you are no doubt aware, the accrediting commission has adopted a much tougher stance with regard to the reaffirmation of accreditation in the past few years, with many institutions being placed on warning and others placed on probation. The commission's action to reaffirm our accreditation validates our effectiveness in meeting our institutional mission, as well as the quality of our programs and caliber of our outstanding faculty and staff. I thank the many members of our college community who participated in the self study and site visit. As well, I extend my gratitude to our Governing Board for their unwavering dedication to Citrus College and for their leadership and support.

While we are heartened by the positive news about our accreditation, the college continues to grapple with the effects of declining state revenues and another difficult budget year. However, I am pleased to report that there is a growing recognition of the contribution of community colleges to the state and national economy. This was reflected in the Governor's proposed budget for 2010-11, and also in his remark that "we can no longer afford to cut higher education" made during his State of the State speech in January.

President Obama also expressed his confidence in community colleges in his State of the Union speech, saying he will urge passage of "a bill that will revitalize our community colleges, which are a career pathway to the children of so many working families." Currently there are several bills moving through Congress that could provide us with a much needed financial infusion, including: H.R. 3221- Student Aid and Fiscal Responsibility Act, H.R. 4196 - The Community College Emergency Stabilization Fund Act, H.R. 2847- Jobs for Main Street, and our state
Chancellor's Office will forward a proposal to create comprehensive programs at community colleges for returning veterans.

While there are no guarantees that this legislation will be passed by both houses of Congress and signed into law, it is gratifying to know that the importance of community colleges to the nation's economic recovery is being recognized in Washington, D.C.

Here at home, progress continues on our construction projects, in spite of some inclement weather that we experienced during the winter intersession. Phase I of the Vocational Technology Building is complete and occupied; Phase 2 is 30 percent complete. The Student Services Building is 60 percent complete and our new Security Building is two months ahead of schedule!

Over the past few weeks, the instructional team has been working diligently to develop next year's schedule of classes. Their focus has been to maintain student access to courses needed to complete certificates, degrees, and transfer requirements, including access to basic skills courses where over fifty percent of our students begin their academic journey. This is a delicate balancing act requiring a great deal of analysis and teamwork.

As we begin the spring semester, I thank you for your many efforts to advance Citrus College and to support the dreams and goals of our students. Our Citrus College students, faculty, and staff are truly among the most dedicated and talented of any community college.

I know we will continue to achieve success on many fronts this spring, and I wish everyone a very productive and enjoyable semester.