Citrus College Recognized as Top Degree Producer

Out of a total of approximately 1,200 community colleges in the nation, The Hispanic Outlook in Higher Education has ranked Citrus College a very impressive 22nd place for the number of associate degrees awarded to Hispanic students—an increase from 27th place in 2014. The college was recognized for the eighth consecutive year in the magazine’s annual “Best Community Colleges for Hispanics: 2015” issue.

“It is truly an honor for Citrus College to be continuously recognized as one of the top community colleges in the country,” said Superintendent/President Geraldine M. Perri, Ph.D. “This achievement should serve as a tremendous source of pride, not only for the institution’s faculty and staff, but also for the communities we serve.”

The Hispanic Outlook in Higher Education is a biweekly, online publication that reaches more than 50,000 readers. The statistics that establish the magazine’s rankings are obtained from the National Center for Education Statistics’ Integrated Postsecondary Education Data Systems (NCES/IPEDS). This year, the data from the community colleges throughout the United States were reviewed, and then each institution was ranked in three categories: total Hispanic enrollment, associate degrees awarded to Hispanic students, and colleges that offer both associate degrees and bachelor’s degrees to Hispanic students.

“Citrus College’s eighth year as a Hispanic Outlook in Higher Education top community college is a stellar accomplishment for the college and its students,” said Mrs. Joanne Montgomery, president of the Citrus Community College District Board of Trustees. “This wonderful recognition underscores the institution’s century of college completion and academic excellence.”

Citrus College’s legacy of success is undeniable. Throughout the last 100 years, our graduates have pursued impressive careers, our students have excelled academically, and our employees have worked tirelessly to advance the institutional mission.

The articles featured in this month’s issue of the Citrus View highlight several of our recent accomplishments and activities. These inspirational stories of achievement and progress serve as an affirmation of the Citrus College community’s commitment to excellence.

Thank you for the important role you continue to play in making our student’s dreams of college completion come true!

Sincerely,
Dr. Geraldine M. Perri
Superintendent/President

Citrus College’s Culture of Success

Citrus College has once again been recognized as a national leader in awarding associate degrees to Hispanic students by the Hispanic Outlook in Higher Education.
Citrus College students recently attended a forum about the relationship between law enforcement policies and individuals’ rights. The event, “Police Procedures and Civil Liberties,” was sponsored by the Associated Students of Citrus College, the Office of Student Life and Leadership Development, and the Social and Behavioral Sciences Division. Its purpose was to present the viewpoints of representatives from law enforcement and civil liberties organizations.

Political science instructor and forum organizer Dave Milbrandt moderated the discussion between Peter Bibring, director of police practices for the American Civil Liberties Union of Southern California and Timothy Staab, chief of police for the City of Glendora. They addressed a variety of law enforcement and civil liberties concerns, such as cell phone searches, DNA testing, the use of drones, and racial profiling.

The forum drew a positive response from the students who attended. According to the Office of Student Life and Leadership Development, the majority of the students surveyed reported that they gained “new knowledge or a greater appreciation for issues related to civil rights and our government’s procedures.”

“The students found the panel discussion very informative and were pleasantly surprised that both sides were closer than one might originally think,” Milbrandt commented.

Citrus College has a long history of successfully transferring students to four-year colleges and universities. In fact, it was part of the college’s mission from the very beginning.

“To the high school student, the junior college offers an opportunity to continue his education for two years,” the Citrus Union High School Yearbook stated in 1916, one year after Citrus College made its debut. “This time is fully recognized by the State University and counted as of equal value with the first two year’s offered in its own departments.”

Initially, there were only seven classes offered and periods were 40 minutes long. However, the number of course offerings increased over time.

“I felt very adequately trained when I [transferred] because we had a well-rounded curriculum,” said Mildred “Skeeter” McCaskill Kobzeff, a member of Citrus College’s class of 1937, in the book Citrus Speaks by Alfred Paul Clark. “Many of the kids I know went on to [universities such as] Stanford, Cal, and Pomona College. You don’t go on to those schools if you don’t have a good background.”

In the late 1940s, clear guidelines for transfer from Citrus College were outlined for students. There were departments of instruction for more than 10 disciplines, matriculation pathways for a variety of areas and several majors had been defined.

“We were always striving to keep the standards of the school up to where students could be transferred,” said former Citrus College Dean Wesley Smith in Citrus Speaks. “There was at least one year that we were one of the top schools, or so we were told by the Superintendent of Public Instruction, in transferring students to the University of California.”

By the 1970s, Citrus College had one of the best transfer records in the state. Forty-years later, we remain a leader in the area of transfer. In fact, Citrus College currently ranks third in the state in the number of associate degrees for transfer awarded.
Citrus College Student Selected for Congressional Internship

Citrus College student Natasha Martinez has been selected to intern for Congresswoman Grace F. Napolitano this coming summer.

Napolitano represents the 32nd District, which serves a large portion of the San Gabriel Valley.

Martinez, a freshman, possesses an ongoing commitment to politics. She has been active in her community since a young age, including serving on the Associated Student Body at Duarte High School, being a member of the Duarte Mayor’s Youth Council, and participating in a job-shadowing program at the City of Hope.

“During my job shadowing experience, I was told my drive and interests would make me a good candidate for a congressional internship,” Martinez said. “I’m really looking forward to this experience.”

Martinez is involved in student activities at Citrus College. She is a member of the Associated Students of Citrus College Activities Committee and contributed to the college’s Centennial Celebration efforts. She is also on the Owl’s swim team.

Martinez’ interest in politics was motivated by her autistic younger brother and her mother’s struggle to get the help he needed.

After Martinez completes her education at Citrus College, she plans to transfer to a four-year university and study law.

Citrus College Student Selected for Congressional Internship

Spring Break is often considered to be a week when students take a break from their studies before completing the academic year. For 11 Citrus College STEM students, however, Spring Break was also an opportunity to participate—and excel—in two national competitions that demonstrated their knowledge of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM), as well as auto technology.

The Rocket Owls—Aaron Bunch, John Flores, Alex Kemnitz, Joseph Molina, and Brian Weatherspoon—traveled to Huntsville, Alabama to compete in the annual NASA Student Launch. In addition to launching a power rocket they designed and built along with its ground support equipment, the Rocket Owls received NASA’s Educational Engagement Award for their outreach to approximately 500 students from the K-12 districts and communities served by Citrus College.

In another competition, the Citrus Automotive and Physics Eco-Marathon Team, or CAPE Owls, participated in the Shell Eco-marathon competition held in Detroit. They designed and built a gasoline-powered vehicle that operated at 532 miles per gallon, earning them 14th place out of 42 entries in the gasoline prototype category. Citrus College students Noura Alayane, James Couch, Jimmy Lam, Oumnia Maaouni, Alec Nystrom, and Casey Rudd participated in the events.

The Rocket Owls were accompanied by Lucia Riderer, physics instructor, and Dr. Eric Rabitoy, dean of natural and physical sciences and library services. Riderer also joined Mariano Rubio, automotive technology instructor, and Dr. Jim Lancaster, dean of curriculum, career technical and continuing education in accompanying the CAPE Owls.

STEM Students Excel in Competitions

Citrus College Student Selected for Congressional Internship
Superintendent/President Receives Award

Citrus College Superintendent/President Geraldine M. Perri, Ph.D. was recently recognized by the national Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society. The society, whose mission is to recognize and encourage the academic achievements of two-year college students, honored Dr. Perri with the Shirley B. Gordon Award for Distinction on April 17th in San Antonio, Texas.

Dr. Perri was one of the select community college presidents and CEOs, and the only college leader from California, to receive the award. Every year, presidents and CEOs from the nation’s 1,137 community colleges are nominated for the recognition, which was established in memory of Dr. Shirley B. Gordon, Phi Theta Kappa’s longest-serving chair of their board of directors.

“I am truly honored to receive this distinguished award,” Dr. Perri said. “The fact that the Shirley B. Gordon Award of Distinction is presented by a student organization is especially meaningful to me, and I am very grateful to Citrus College’s Beta Nu Eta Chapter of Phi Theta Kappa for their nomination.”

In 2012, the Beta Nu Eta chapter of Phi Theta Kappa conducted research on college completion at Citrus College. The collaborative efforts between the chapter, Dr. Perri, and the college community became a catalyst for the institution’s innovative College of Completion initiative. Since the initiative’s introduction, Citrus College has broken its own record for the number of degrees awarded.

“The Shirley B. Gordon Award of Distinction is very special, and I am so proud of Dr. Perri for receiving it,” said Mrs. Joanne Montgomery, president of the Citrus Community College District Board of Trustees. “She exemplifies the true essence of the award, and under Dr. Perri’s leadership, Citrus College students continually achieve new successes.”

“Women in Leadership” Share Stories

In celebration of Women’s History Month at Citrus College, on March 26 five women who hold positions of leadership at the college shared their experiences and offered advice to students on accomplishing goals and achieving success.

Participating in the panel discussion, which was organized by Student Trustee Farihah Chowdhury, were Dr. Barbara R. Dickerson, clerk-secretary of the Citrus Community College District Board of Trustees; Ms. Claudette E. Dain, vice president of finance and administrative services; Dr. Dana Hester, dean of social and behavioral sciences and distance education; Dr. Lan Hao, director of institutional research, planning and effectiveness, and Dr. Veronica Estrada, program evaluator and student leadership instructor.

The women’s stories centered on shared values and experiences that included family, mentors, strong work ethics, and opportunities to choose their life pathways. The students in attendance interacted with, and asked questions of, the panel.

“I put this panel together because I truly wanted to recognize the hard work of women leaders on our campus,” Chowdhury said in an interview with the Citrus College Clarion. “I wanted to highlight some women who, I feel, have rich backgrounds that can provide leadership and guidance for the betterment of the college.”
The Citrus College Foundation and the Citrus Alumni and Friends Association jointly organized an event on March 27, 2015 designed to raise community members’ awareness of the college’s programs and services.

As guests of the Citrus College Veterans Success Center, more than 100 alumni, Citrus College Foundation donors, and members of the community joined the college’s students, faculty and staff for a tour of the Veterans Success Center. They also had the opportunity to meet and talk to the student veterans who attended the event.

“I was very pleased to see so many members of the Citrus College community, especially students, at the Veterans Success Center that afternoon,” said Christina M. Garcia, director of the Citrus College Foundation and one of the event organizers. “Community members like to meet our students, and the fact that many of the students at the event are also military veterans was an opportunity for our guests to thank them and voice their support.”

The Veterans Success Center open house is one of several activities offered by the Citrus Alumni and Friends Association throughout the academic year. For information about future events, please contact the Citrus College Foundation, foundation@citruscollege.edu or 626-914-8825.

Board President Receives Recognition
Trustee Joanne Montgomery Named a 48th Assembly District Woman of the Year

Mrs. Joanne Montgomery, president of the Citrus Community College District Board of Trustees, was recently honored by Assemblymember Roger Hernandez. A longtime Monrovia resident and educator, Mrs. Montgomery was selected to be acknowledged as one of the 48th Assembly District’s Women of the Year at a special awards ceremony on Saturday, March 28, 2015.

Montgomery’s involvement in the community includes 32 years as a Monrovia Unified School District elementary school teacher in the gifted and talented education program. She has also served as a master teacher for several universities and as a member of numerous school committees.

In 1998, Montgomery was appointed to the Citrus Community College District Board of Trustees. She was later elected to the board for four consecutive terms.

“IT IS TRULY AN HONOR TO BE RECOGNIZED BY ASSEMBLYMEMBER HERNANDEZ,” Montgomery said. “I have always been passionate about empowering others and making a difference in my community. Receiving this honor for doing something that means so much to me is especially gratifying.”

Alumni and Friends Visit Veterans Success Center

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Citrus College Foundation donors and members of the community enjoyed refreshments and met student veterans during a recent open house held at the Veterans Success Center.

Mrs. Joanne Montgomery has served on the Citrus Community College District Board of Trustees for 17 years.