

# Introduction



# History of Citrus College

Citrus College is the oldest community college in Los Angeles County and the fifth oldest in California. Founded in 1915, the college opened with 27 students, six faculty members and a curriculum that emphasized advanced college preparatory studies.

Since its founding, local, state, national, and international events have shaped the history and legacy of Citrus College. During its 100-year history, the institution has stood at the forefront of change and achievement on many occasions.

The events that determined early California's growth and prosperity also formed the communities that shaped Citrus College's existence. Much of this can be attributed to one of Southern California's most prominent pioneers, Henry Dalton. In 1844, Dalton, an English merchant, settled in the region and acquired a vast amount of land that spanned from downtown Los Angeles to Claremont and encompassed much of the present-day San Gabriel Valley. Dalton built his family's home, Rancho Azusa, near the foothills of the San Gabriel Valley in what is now the City of Azusa. He is also credited with organizing the first school at his home in 1860. The school's location, known as Dalton Hill, became Citrus Union High School's second location and Citrus College's original campus.

During the 1860s, new residents from other parts of the United States began to settle in the area currently served by Citrus College. Most traveled by wagon train until the Santa Fe Railroad completed a line to Los Angeles in 1886. Shortly thereafter, the

Southern Pacific Railroad established a route. The extension of the railroads facilitated a major economic phenomenon – the growth of the citrus industry and Southern California's first frenetic real estate boom. According to the archives of the Reeder Heritage Foundation, "The first train loaded exclusively with oranges traveled east from Los Angeles in February 1886."

In addition to the citrus farms, the citrus packing houses were major San Gabriel Valley employers. The college's historical narrative, *Citrus Speaks*, noted, "In 1891, citrus fruits were the up and coming industry of the Azusa-Glendora area. Within a decade, they would replace almost all other crops in the rich agricultural belt along the mountains stretching from Pasadena to San Bernardino. For the next 60 years, citrus would be the chief commercial crop of the richest agricultural region in the world."

What better name to bestow on the oldest community college in Los Angeles County—Citrus College?

Citrus College was founded in an era of social change. The 20<sup>th</sup> Century prior to World War I was known as "The Progressive Era." It was a period of economic and social change that included advances in technology and communications, an improved standard of living, and greater access to public education as a result of an increase in the number of public high schools. These factors provided an ideal opportunity for the introduction of a new concept in higher education—the junior college.

The prosperity and stability provided by the citrus industry made it possible for residents to focus on providing more educational opportunities for its residents. Citrus Union High School, founded on July 14, 1891, became a new institution 24 years later – Citrus College, a national leader among America's community colleges.

In 1914, Dr. Floyd S. Hayden, who had served as a principal in the Chino and Chaffey school districts, became the principal of Citrus Union High School. Hayden, an Indiana native who received his doctorate from the University of Chicago, is remembered as a man who possessed a strong belief in the principles of education and democracy and held a deep affinity for his adopted community of Azusa. These attributes fueled Hayden's efforts to start a junior college in the Azusa-Glendora area.

"My father was absolutely devoted to those two years of free education," said Hayden's daughter, Margaret Hayden Rector. "He was proud to establish Citrus in 1915. . . His vision was that, economically, the student had a right to two free years of college."

In Citrus College's first year of operation, female students outnumbered the males by about two to one, and many of them were housewives. According to *Citrus Speaks*, "There was no athletic program, no full-time junior college teachers, no separate facilities, no vocational curriculum, and no night classes. The first courses offered in 1915 were mathematics, French, English, physics, German, Spanish, and economics. By the 1920s, night classes were added with a focus on "practical subjects," such

as bookkeeping, typing, millinery and cabinet making."

Citrus College's first graduating class in 1917 boasted four graduates. While enrollment had nearly quadrupled to 100 students by 1925, only 11 students graduated from the college in its first decade. In addition to a worldwide flu pandemic, World War I took its toll on colleges throughout the country, as the nation turned all of its energies to winning the war.

During the 1920s, the high school and the college moved from Dalton Hill to its current location on Foothill Boulevard. The college added night classes in bookkeeping, typing, and cabinet making, which enabled students who worked during the day to attend classes. College enrollment began to grow.

The Great Depression of the 1920s and 1930s took its toll on nearly every societal demographic, including the communities surrounding Citrus College. Many students gave up their dreams of a college education entirely, and others dropped out of college to work and help support their families. Parents who could not afford to pay for four years of tuition at four-year colleges and universities sent their students to Citrus College to begin their college education.

Throughout its history, transfer has been a priority at Citrus College. Over the years, students have been well-prepared to transfer to California State University and University of California institutions, as well as private colleges and universities. Transfer students from as early as the late 1930s reported that they felt adequately trained to succeed at such elite institutions

as Stanford; the University of California, Berkeley; and Pomona College.

In January 1935, Citrus College dedicated Hayden Hall, a multipurpose building, used mostly as a place for women students to study. It is the last of the institution's original buildings to remain on the campus today.

In the late 1930s, as the nation recovered from the Great Depression, life was good for the 190 students at Citrus College. There was strong school spirit, and the college had established traditions and developed a distinct culture. The college's athletics programs, buoyed by enthusiastic community support, achieved more prominence as a result of the Owls' first-ever postseason football game. The school newspaper, *Citric Acid*, had begun to win student journalism awards—a legacy that stands to this day. Cleverly, but not surprisingly, the student newspaper was named for the area's ubiquitous citrus industry. According to *Citrus Speaks*, at that time, "Acres and acres of orange and lemon trees surrounded the college."

In 1941, the United States entered World War II, resulting in a dramatic enrollment drop as male students left college to serve in the military. Accounts of the early '40s described the college environment as "strange" due to the absence of male students. In 1945, only six degrees were conferred—all to female students. At the conclusion of World War II, veterans returned home eager to resume their lives. The GI Bill, designed to help returning veterans readjust to civilian life, provided education benefits, and many GIs enrolled in Citrus College.

As in the late 1800s, the San Gabriel Valley region experienced unprecedented

growth after World War II. This time, however, the orange and lemon groves gave way to housing developments. The resulting population boom eventually led to the establishment of three new high schools in the area and the breakup of Citrus Union High School and Citrus College. Between 1946 and 1959, the College purchased 88 acres of land to expand the campus from 16 acres to the 104 acres it occupies today.

The college continued its tradition of producing transfer students during the late 1940s and strived to keep the standard of instruction high to facilitate transfer. The State Superintendent of Public Instruction recognized Citrus College as "one of the top schools in transferring to the University of California."

During the 1950s and early 1960s, enrollment and the number of associate degrees conferred increased: enrollment from 500 students in 1955 to 5,535 students in 1965, and degrees conferred from 85 in 1955 to 280 in 1965. Colleges throughout the state implemented changes in order to meet these educational needs. Further, a new state law passed in 1960, the Master Plan for Higher Education, which stated the primary mission of the California Community Colleges would also include remedial instruction, English as a second language courses, adult noncredit instruction, community education courses, and workforce training services. The Vocational Education Act of 1963 committed the federal government to supporting trade-specific education. In response, the college introduced vocational programs that included data processing, automotive technology, cosmetology and machine tool technology.

As a result of the population boom, the cities of Azusa and Glendora incorporated high schools into their unified school districts. On July 1, 1961, Citrus Union High School District dissolved and the new, independent Citrus College – within the same geographic boundaries – formed.

Prior to 1967, most Citrus College students lived in Azusa and Glendora. In 1967, the district expanded to include students from Claremont, Duarte, and Monrovia. In 1970, the Citrus Community College District formed, allowing residents of the five cities to elect trustees to represent their areas.

During the late 1960s and 1970s, the Citrus College student body became more ethnically diverse, and female student enrollment increased. By 1975, enrollment had grown to more than 11,000, with nearly 700 degrees conferred that year. The college also maintained its reputation as having one of the best transfer records in the state.

The 1960s and 1970s brought about an ambitious building and expansion project. A \$6 million bond passed in 1962, enabling the construction of 13 new buildings and facilities. They included the Stadium, Student Center, Lecture Hall, and others—culminating with the completion of the Haugh Performing Arts Center in 1971.

The passage of Proposition 13 in 1978 initially threatened to cause a financial crisis for all California community colleges. As a result, Citrus College made cuts in its courses, programs, and services. The college community rallied to support the institution through fundraisers and the widely touted “Sweat Equity Days.” Enrollment dropped slightly to 10,000 students, with nearly 25 percent stating

earning an associate degree and transferring to a four-year institution as their educational goal. Vocational programs increased in popularity, and the number of vocational certificates awarded increased. By 1988, Citrus College offered more than 30 different vocational programs.

During the 1990s, Citrus College administrators aggressively sought state funds for capital projects leading to more than \$60 million in new buildings, renovations, and additions to the campus facilities. These projects enhanced the learning environment, increased access for the disabled, improved safety, and added technological capabilities to classrooms. The addition of the adapted physical education facility and the computer lab greatly improved the college’s educational resources.

Over the next decade, Citrus College enjoyed the first significant bump in enrollment it had seen in many years. By the mid-2000s, enrollment had increased 23 percent to 13,541 in 2005. The number of associate degrees conferred also increased; 816 degrees were conferred in 2005, compared to 560 degrees a decade earlier.

In March 2004, Citrus Community College District voters passed Measure G, a \$121 million general bond, which began a series of new building projects and infrastructure improvements designed to meet the needs of students and the community. Since bond-funded construction began in 2006, Citrus College has witnessed the construction and completion of the Central Plant, the Louis E. Zellers Center for Innovation, the Field House and Concession Building, the Vocational Technology Building, the Campus Safety

Building, and the Student Services Building. In fall 2014, construction began on the Fine Arts Complex. Measure G also funded new lighting for the Citrus College Stadium, the Banner Enterprise System, the renovation of the Main Gym and the Administration Building, and myriad infrastructure upgrades.

The ethnic composition of the student body has gradually become more diverse over time, and today the student population is 20 percent white non-Hispanic and 59 percent Hispanic. This demographic composition has earned Citrus College a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) designation, which is defined by the U.S. Department of Education as a college or university whose Hispanic students comprise 25 percent or more of the total student body.

The HSI designation has allowed Citrus College to receive several Department of Education grants to assist Hispanic and other students who can benefit from enhanced services and programs. A \$3 million HIS cooperative grant in 2005 funded the Center for Teacher Excellence, a teacher preparation partnership with the University of La Verne. In fall 2008, Citrus College received its first STEM grant to increase the number and success rate of first-generation, low-income, and underrepresented college students in the science, technology, engineering, and mathematics fields (STEM). In 2009, the college received a \$2.1 million HSI grant that established College Success, a program that offers resources to students who perform at the pre-collegiate level in math, English, or reading.

Both the STEM Program and the Center for Teacher Excellence received second HSI grants in 2011. The STEM Program

received a total of \$4.3 million in grants that established the college's RACE to STEM Program. The Center for Teacher Excellence received a \$3.7 million cooperative grant with the University of La Verne to improve the education career pathway for students at both institutions, which includes equipping them to incorporate high technology in their teaching strategies.

Citrus College has received accolades and honors for the quality of its academic programs and the effectiveness of its student services. The Veterans Success Center garnered national attention for Citrus College as the first college in the nation to offer a transitional counseling class for student veterans. In 2010, the Citrus College became one of four California community colleges featured in a video presented at the White House Summit on Community Colleges. In 2010, Citrus College was earned a Center of Excellence for Veteran Student Success (CEVSS) grant by the Department of Education.

In response to a White House mandate challenging the nation's colleges and universities to increase their graduation rates by 2020, Citrus College launched its College of Completion initiative in 2012. College of Completion encourages and supports Citrus College students as they endeavor to earn an associate degree, transfer to four-year colleges and universities, and enter the career fields of their choice. The college community offers a variety of academic programs and student services that facilitate student achievement and, ultimately, degree completion—an effort that has resulted in a record number of degrees conferred at every Commencement since 2011.

Over the years, Citrus College has garnered accolades at the national, state, and local levels. The institution has been consistently ranked as a top 100 associate degree producer by *Community College Week*. In 2014, the publication named the college the fifth fastest-growing community college in the 10,000 or more enrollment category. *The Hispanic Outlook in Higher Education* has included the college in its annual ranking of the top 50 community colleges in the nation for nearly a decade. In addition, the college has been named a Military Friendly School® by *G.I. Jobs* magazine every year since 2011.

In 2014, Citrus College added three more recognitions to its repertoire. PayScale, Inc. named Citrus College 10<sup>th</sup> in the nation among public two-year colleges, based on alumni earning potential. *STEM Jobs<sup>SM</sup>* magazine named Citrus College in its inaugural issue for its success in job alignment, job placement, and program diversity in the science, technology, engineering, and mathematics fields.

Today, Citrus College grants associate degrees in 46 fields of study, including 15 Associate Degrees for Transfer. The College offers certificates of achievement, certificates of competency and skill awards in 48 academic and career/technical areas. The College boasts an active student government, numerous social clubs and events, student organizations, and college wide activities. Citrus College offers many free student-support services, including personal and academic counseling, transfer information and assistance, academic tutoring, veteran's support, and career planning. Through its Community and Noncredit Education Division, the college provides courses that encourage learning at every stage of life.

On June 3, 2015, Citrus College observed its final Centennial event, concluding an academic year that celebrated the institution's distinguished past while actively planning its future successes.