

CITRUSVIEW

LATEST NEWS FROM CITRUS COLLEGE



Champion the Good

The outbreak of coronavirus, or COVID-19, has brought an unprecedented crisis to communities across the globe, including the Los Angeles region.

In response to this pandemic, Citrus College decided to close its campus and transition to remote delivery of instruction and student support services, as well as a remote work environment for employees, beginning March 18. While some of the issues, concerns and logistics many of us face in this “new normal” are challenging, they pale in comparison to those afflicted with this illness.

We are thankful to those throughout our nation who are in critical leadership positions, as well as those providing health care and other vital services on the front lines. They are our unsung heroes, and this edition of the Citrus View is dedicated to them.

I also want to thank and commend you, the Citrus College community, for your flexibility, commitment and willingness to do what it takes to put our students first. Their safety and well-being is – and always will be – the college’s top priority.

Your positive attitude is a testament to the collaborative spirit of Citrus College. It also demonstrates the significance of remaining optimistic in the face of adversity. Perhaps there is no better time to champion all of the great things happening at our college.

My hope is that this newsletter provides you with a little normalcy – and maybe even some inspiration – during these trying times.

Thank you for everything you are doing to advance the mission of Citrus College. Stay healthy and safe!

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

Citrus College Among Nation’s Top 10 Community Colleges

A national magazine has ranked Citrus College eighth out of more than 1,100 community colleges in the United States for awarding associate degrees to Hispanic students.

Every year, the Hispanic Outlook on Education produces a special edition that lists the leading community colleges in the country according to the number of associate degrees produced. Citrus College has been included in the rankings for more than a decade and was ranked 25th in the United States last year.

“When Citrus College is listed among national rankings such as these, it validates our efforts to support the academic achievement of all students, while reinforcing our commitment to provide an innovative and inclusive learning environment,” said Dr. Geraldine M. Perri, superintendent/president of Citrus College.

This newest recognition comes on the heels of another honor Citrus College recently received as a result of college-wide efforts to increase student success and completion. In January, *Diverse: Issues in Higher Education* ranked Citrus College first among all public two-year community colleges in the country for the number of associate degrees awarded in English language and literature/letters to minority students. They also



Citrus College was recognized once again for being a top producer of associate degrees for Hispanic students.

ranked the college in the top 100 in more than 80 other categories.

“It is an incredible honor to have Citrus College’s efforts to meet the needs of its diverse student body acknowledged by multiple organizations,” said Dr. Patricia A. Rasmussen, president of the Citrus Community College District Board of Trustees.

The Citrus College campus is closed through June 12, 2020. Faculty and staff are working remotely. Visit citruscollege.edu/covid19 for information on remote services, as well as important coronavirus (COVID-19) updates.

New Wayfinding Maps Enhance Student Experience



The back of the new campus wayfinding maps features original artwork designed by the Citrus College Office of Communications and External Relations.

During the first week of the spring 2020 semester, students were welcomed to Citrus College by redesigned campus wayfinding maps.

New maps were installed in refurbished display boards between AD/ED, between MA/PC, north of parking lot S4 and on the south side of P3.

"Citrus College is consistently voted as the best higher education institution in the San Gabriel Valley because of its commitment to student success and completion, but I almost wish there were another category for most beautiful college," said Superintendent/President Perri. "Our 104-acre campus is lined with trees, state-of-the-art facilities and, now, these wonderful maps to help students find whatever it is they may be searching for. This is just one more way the college is working to enhance the student experience!"

Communications and external relations worked with several college constituent groups to identify locations and update information featured on the previous maps. It took several months of research, coordination and designing to deliver the final product, along with the stylized artwork for the backs of the displays. Once complete, reprographics printed all materials in-house, and facilities and construction installed them throughout campus.

"These kinds of assignments are incredibly rewarding as they allow us to collaborate with several college departments to create a product that directly benefits students," said Melissa Utsuki, executive director of communications and external relations. "I am proud of my team for carrying this project from conception to delivery."

Citrus College Earns "Military Friendly" Designation 10 Years in a Row

Citrus College once again earned annual recognition as a Military Friendly School for its commitment to helping veterans successfully transition from the military to higher education.

While the college has been named a Military Friendly School for an entire decade, this is the first time it has also been recognized as a Military Spouse Friendly School. Citrus College is one of only nine colleges and universities in California to receive this special designation for 2020-2021.

"This phenomenal achievement is a reflection of the programs that the Citrus College Veterans Success Center has in place for its military service member community," said Superintendent/President Perri. "The college is proud to receive this outstanding recognition and aims to continue enhancing its services for this exceptional community on campus."

Nearly 400 student veterans benefit each year from services provided by the Veterans Success Center, a physical resource on campus that provides access to computers, academic counseling, financial aid assistance and mental health services.

Citrus College's supportive environment for student veterans, coupled with the college's ability to meet specific academic thresholds, such as student retention, persistence and graduation rates, contributed to this year's "Gold" distinction.

"Being designated a Military Friendly School for 10 consecutive years and now being recognized as a Military Spouse Friendly School indicates that Citrus College understands how to effectively navigate the complexities of serving this important student population," said Board President Rasmussen. "I am confident that the college will remain at the forefront of supporting the academic and professional goals of military service members and their spouses."



Dustin Glover, a veteran and part-time administrative clerk II in the Citrus College Student Life and Leadership Development program, assists a student veteran from a safe distance.

Student Affairs Trainings Promote Empathy, Connection

Nearly 250 members of the Citrus College community have completed trainings to help them understand and support a variety of vulnerable student populations.



The Citrus College Student Affairs Division now offers ally and student support trainings focused on five specific groups: basic needs students, dreamers (or undocumented students), foster youth, the LGBTQ+ community and student veterans. Next fall, they will add a sixth group to the trainings: first-generation students.

“There is a lot to learn about our students, especially the most vulnerable among them. Knowing how to better support them should be important to every employee,” said Dr. Maryann Tolano-Leveque, dean of students. “Together, we can make a difference and create a welcoming campus culture for all students.”

The first ally training was offered in May 2019 when student affairs identified a need for the college community to have a better understanding of the undocumented student population. Since that time, the trainings have expanded to include additional student populations.



The ally trainings begin with an overview of the population in question. They also discuss the challenges specific to the population, review intersectionality and what

it means, identify personal privileges and how they relate to the struggles of the population, learn about appropriate community resources, examine what being an ally means, and explore how to be a good ally. After completing a training, each participant is given an ally sticker to display in their office.

“Not many colleges offer trainings like these,” said Dr. Tolano-Leveque. “There has been a lot of interest in learning about these groups at Citrus College. In fact, there was so much interest that we hosted two ally training days during the winter 2020 session and many participants encouraged us to do it again.”

In the future, student affairs is hoping to host one ally training per month during the fall and spring semesters. They would also like to continue hosting all-day trainings during the winter session.



DSPS, Facilities Welcome New Employees



Michelle Hernandez is the new director of disabled student programs and services.

Michelle Hernandez, the new director of the Citrus College Disabled Student Programs and Services (DSPS) Department, is already familiar with the college. Prior to serving in this newly created position, she worked as a counselor, instructor and learning disabilities specialist in DSPS for eight years. Her professional experience also includes two years as a disability management counselor in the California State University, Northridge (CSUN), Disability Resources and Educational Services Department. Ms. Hernandez holds a bachelor’s degree in political science from the University of California, Los Angeles, and a master’s degree in social work from CSUN. In addition, she is a certified learning disabilities specialist who holds certificates in adult learning disabilities, as well as college counseling and student services.

“I am keenly familiar with current procedures in place in DSPS, and I am motivated to enhance and expand these processes to improve the services we provide to students,” Ms. Hernandez said. “Serving as a DSPS counselor, I gained an understanding of campus culture and the dynamics within the department. Counseling students was a rewarding endeavor and there is nothing like cheering for DSPS students who participated in the commencement ceremony. Being part of their growth and success makes me proud.”



Ernie Loera is the new associate director of facilities and construction.

In January, **Ernie Loera** joined the Citrus College Facilities and Construction Department as its new associate director. He brings with him extensive experience managing, planning and coordinating construction projects. Mr. Loera has worked within the California community colleges system as a campus project manager, facilities project manager and project manager. Most recently, he served as campus project manager for the San Bernardino Community College District’s Measure CC. Mr. Loera holds a bachelor’s degree from California State Polytechnic University, Pomona, and is a certified construction manager.

“During the two months I have been at Citrus College, I have found my coworkers to be welcoming. Everyone exhibits a ‘team player’ characteristic, which I believe is the key in building trust and providing excellent service,” Mr. Loera said. “My short-term goal in this position is to understand the culture and goals of Citrus College. This will help me better understand how to support the college’s mission, vision and values. My long-term goal is to assist the facilities and construction team with maintaining and constructing state-of-the-art facilities, which will continue to offer a safe and accessible learning environment that helps prepare students for lifelong success.”

Citrus College Men's Basketball Team Excels On and Off the Court

The Citrus College men's basketball team recently wrapped up another successful season, ending with a 20-10 record and their fourth straight Western State Conference championship. The players' skills on the court, however, weren't the only cause for celebration.

In late February, the California Community College Athletic Association (CCCAA) announced that the Citrus College men's basketball team had been selected as a Scholar Team. According to the organization, this award is presented annually to one team in each sport that has excelled academically and in athletic competition. To be eligible for this designation, each team member must maintain a GPA of 3.0 or higher.

"This extraordinary recognition reflects the dedication, focus and hard work that the men's basketball team brings to the basketball court and to the classroom," said Superintendent/President Perri. "Earning the CCCAA's top academic award is a remarkable achievement, and Citrus College is very proud of the team – go Owls!"

While the Scholar Team Award recognizes the accomplishments of the 2018-2019 team, many of this year's team members were return players.

"The stellar academic performances of these students, combined with their proven athletic abilities, establish them as being among Citrus College's best and brightest," said Board President Rasmussen. "I am confident that the skills and discipline that helped the men's basketball team earn this prestigious recognition will benefit each player in the future as they pursue their academic and career goals."



Men's basketball coach Brett Lauer talks to his players during a timeout at one of the team's games in April 2019.

Rocket Owls Launch Heartwarming Community Outreach Activities

The Citrus College Rocket Owls are on a new mission: sponsoring science workshops for kids!

Since last December, the Rocket Owls have been participating in a new tradition called "Share the Excitement: Adopt a School for the Holidays." The STEM students adopted Hope Lutheran School in Glendora, where they spent a day with eighth graders and children attending an after-school program. They worked on activities focused on understanding Newton's laws of motion, including building and racing balloon-powered cars.

Comunidad Cesar Chavez in Los Angeles, a major provider of supportive services for homeless families in East Los Angeles, was the Rocket Owls' next destination. At the shelter, the Rocket Owls helped children build straw rockets and snap circuits. Every child who participated also received an oversized stuffed toy and a backpack with school supplies.

The Rocket Owls also held workshops with Ability First in Claremont, an organization that provides

programs and services to help children and adults with physical and developmental disabilities.

"Seeing the look of wonder on the faces of these children as they interacted with our college students was absolutely priceless," said Dr. Lucia Riderer, physics instructor and Rocket Owls advisor. "My hope is that other groups at Citrus College will be inspired to do similar outreach activities and make an impact in our community."

In addition to these outreach activities, the Rocket Owls continue to sponsor the Junior Rocket Owls program, where students from the Glendora Unified School District work in teams with the Rocket Owls to design, build and fly model rockets. This year, 20 fifth grade students participated.

"Our students take what they learn at Citrus College and use it to positively impact the community," said Superintendent/President Perri. "I am proud of the Rocket Owls and wish them the best in their future endeavors. Hats off to Dr. Riderer and her wonderful team of scientists!"



Rocket Owls students spend quality time with children at Comunidad Cesar Chavez in Los Angeles in February 2020.

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