

# CITRUS VIEW

LATEST NEWS FROM CITRUS COLLEGE

## Celebrating our resilience and success



As you know, we recently reached the one year mark since the outbreak of COVID 19. Although this anniversary elicits a wide range of feelings, one strong emotion I have is gratitude for our college community.

Citrus College's faculty and staff have overcome many challenges this year, while also facing stressors unique to each of them. Despite these difficulties, everyone has come together to ensure that the needs of our students are met. From the very start of the pandemic, our goal has been to continue providing excellent academic opportunities to our students.

This issue of the Citrus View demonstrates that we have been doing just that. Whether it is innovative visual and performing arts offerings, a virtual high school counselor conference or the academic success of our student athletes, the college community has worked hard to make great things happen. In fact, Citrus College has continued to earn recognition and awards, the most recent of which is the Military Friendly School honor, which is highlighted in this newsletter.

While preparing to return to a more normal way of life, Citrus College's commitment to academic excellence and student success will endure.

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

## Dream Resource Center launches at Citrus College

Did you know that Citrus College has a Dream Resource Center dedicated to fostering a welcoming and inclusive environment for undocumented students?

Established in January 2021, the center is staffed by UndocuLiaison Amayrani Ochoa Almeida, who supports students through various services and programming. Some of the services offered at the center include individualized guidance and assistance related to financial aid, in-state tuition and Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA).

The center can also promote and connect students to free legal services, including education and outreach activities, through the Community College Immigration Legal Services program. The services, which are also available to Citrus College faculty and staff, include legal consultations to screen for immigration relief, DACA renewals, family-based petitions and U.S. citizenship/naturalization applications.

Additionally, the Dream Resource Center offers an ally training for students and employees every fall and spring. Once completed, participants receive an "UndocuAlly" decal.

"The Dream Resource Center is an extraordinary addition to the list of support services that Citrus College offers to its students," said Superintendent/President Perri. "I am hopeful that students and staff will take advantage of the ally training, which will help foster a better understanding of the challenges that undocumented students face, as well as the ways in which we can offer support."

The Dream Resource Center will be located inside the Ross L. Handy Campus Center. During the campus closure, services are available virtually to students.



Citrus College  
*Dreamer Ally*

"Establishing a Dream Resource Center for undocumented students is a wish come true for many students and employees, who have already reached out about enrolling in classes as a result of this new program," said Dr. Maryann Tolano-Leveque, dean of students.

"Providing resources to support undocumented students is critical in promoting their sense of belonging, academic success and completion at the college. I feel privileged to be in a position to lead these efforts, and I am incredibly grateful to have an experienced advocate like Amayrani Ochoa coordinating the center's programs and services."

For more information on the Dream Resource Center and upcoming virtual events, visit [www.citruscollege.edu/stdntsrvc/drc](http://www.citruscollege.edu/stdntsrvc/drc).



The Dream Resource Center offers a two-part ally training for Citrus College employees and students every fall and spring. Note: this photo was taken before the campus closed due to COVID-19.

The Citrus College campus is currently closed. Faculty and staff are working remotely.  
Visit [www.citruscollege.edu/covid19](http://www.citruscollege.edu/covid19) and follow the college's social media accounts for more information.

# Alumna to provide leadership for pathway improvement initiatives



Ms. Bermudez, a former Citrus College student trustee, is settling into her new community college leadership position.

It is hard to imagine Linda Bermudez being intimidated by anything.

Since graduating from Citrus College in 2008, the former student trustee has earned a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology degree from the University of California, Los Angeles, and a Master of Public Administration degree from the University of Southern California. She has also acquired more than 10 years of experience holding leadership positions in a variety of public, nonprofit and community organizations.

However, Ms. Bermudez noted that none of this would have been possible without Citrus College.

"It took the investment of an amazing group of faculty and staff to transform me from a scared and overwhelmed first-generation college student to a woman who felt empowered to take on anything that came her way," she said.

The most recent opportunity to come Ms. Bermudez's way is the chance to serve as the K-14 technical assistance provider for the Rancho Santiago Community College District. In this role, she will provide regional leadership in the development, administration and organization of the K-12 pathway improvement initiatives for Los Angeles County. She will also serve as the region's K-14 representative for the Los Angeles/Orange County Regional Consortium's Strong Workforce program, of which Citrus College is a member.

"I came across this position last fall and it felt like the job was written uniquely for me," Ms. Bermudez said. "My career has been driven by my desire to open opportunities and resources for others. Ultimately, my calling to work in the field of education is a result of how education has changed my life, especially how access to resources, programs and mentors opened doors for me."

In addition to settling into her new role, Ms. Bermudez is also planning on pursuing a doctoral degree.

According to Superintendent/President Perri, Ms. Bermudez's story demonstrates the transformative role that community colleges plays in the lives of students.

"Ms. Bermudez's advancement as a student and as a professional demonstrates the importance of community colleges. Her years at Citrus College provided a strong foundation for future success," Superintendent/President Perri said. "On behalf of the entire college community, I wish her well in this new venture. We are all very proud of her!"

Ms. Bermudez added that the encouragement she continues to receive from Citrus College means a lot to her.

"My academic and career path is, in many ways, a reflection of those that invested in me during my years as a Citrus College Owl," she said. "Nearly 16 years later, that support system remains. It is extremely special to be able to say that the college's faculty and staff remain my biggest supporters to this day. I truly believe the impact that Citrus College has on the lives of students can never be fully captured."

## Citrus College earns 'Military Friendly' honor for 11th consecutive year



The Citrus College Veterans Success Center organized a career panel in November 2019 in which a handful of veterans spoke about their transition from military to civilian life. Note: this photo was taken before the campus closed due to COVID 19.

A longtime supporter and champion of student veterans, Citrus College recently earned its 11th consecutive Military Friendly School designation.

Home to more than 400 student veterans, Citrus College received the 2021 2022 award from VIQ TORY, a service disabled and veteran owned small business that owns and operates the Military Friendly brand. Schools receiving the honor were evaluated from survey responses and public data sources.

One shining example of Citrus College's commitment to veterans is the Veterans Success Center, which connects veterans to a wide variety of

services, from academic counseling and orientations to mental health support and vocational rehabilitation. The center also helps student veterans navigate military tuition assistance programs.

Throughout the pandemic, the Veterans Success Center has maintained its commitment to veterans virtually through Zoom drop in lounge times; communications through Canvas, email and the Citrus Mobile app; and via phone.

"I want to thank the incredible employees who work in our Veterans Success Center – they make sure our student veterans and active service members receive the support they need to excel in the classroom and in their future careers," said Superintendent/President Perri. "Citrus College is grateful to receive this honor."

The list of 2021 2022 Military Friendly Schools will be published in the May issue of G.I. Jobs magazine.

"On behalf of the board, I want to thank Citrus College faculty and staff for their dedication to student veterans," said Dr. Patricia A. Rasmussen, president of the Citrus Community College District Board of Trustees. "This important honor is an affirmation of the important work being done, as well as a sign to veterans considering higher education that Citrus College is a fantastic destination."

For more information about the Veterans Success Center, visit [www.citruscollege.edu/stdntsrn/veterans](http://www.citruscollege.edu/stdntsrn/veterans).

# Citrus College earns accolade from Phi Theta Kappa honor society

Phi Theta Kappa, an international honor society with nearly 1,300 chapters around the world, recently honored Citrus College's Beta Nu Eta Chapter for excelling in membership development.

Established in 1918, the Mississippi based honor society named Beta Nu Eta a 2021 REACH Chapter. Chapters receiving this honor, which stands for Recognizing Excellence in Acceptance and Completion with Honors, must achieve or exceed 15% for their membership acceptance rate.

As a result, Beta Nu Eta will receive special Phi Theta Kappa graduation stoles.



The Citrus College Phi Theta Kappa Beta Nu Eta Chapter, whose board members and advisors are shown above, was named a 2021 REACH Chapter.

"I am so proud of Beta Nu Eta students and advisors for their efforts to bring additional students into such a terrific organization," said Superintendent/President Perri. "Given their dedication, more Citrus College students are now receiving the benefits associated with a Phi Theta Kappa membership, such as scholarships and engagement with fellow students and faculty."

Established at Citrus College in the 1990s, Beta Nu Eta focuses on two major projects every year: the College Project is a service based effort aimed at bettering the Citrus College campus, and Honors in Action is a research based project focused on making a global impact.

These projects allow Citrus College students to engage in research and intellectual dialogue, in addition to helping students bond and hone their interpersonal skills. Beta Nu Eta has submitted both projects for the current academic year and is awaiting their scores.

The chapter boasts more than a dozen active members who are involved in attending meetings, holding officer positions and participating in service projects.



# Citrus College arts stay active during pandemic



Citrus College student musicians in Night Shift perform virtually during the pandemic.

During a public health crisis that has greatly impacted the output of art throughout the world, the Citrus College Visual and Performing Arts Division found innovative ways to remain active and produce several projects virtually, ranging from art exhibits to live and prerecorded productions.

When the pandemic struck last year, the division faced several challenges, including learning how to teach and connect with students in a remote environment and how to transition its ensemble touring schedule, visual art exhibits and performing arts season into a new digital environment.

Despite these obstacles, the visual and performing arts division and the Haugh Performing Arts Center collaborated to deliver a handful of projects, some of which were mixed and edited, while others were livestreamed.

Examples include the college's theatre arts program performing "A Christmas Carol" and a summer production of "The 39 Steps." With every performance, faculty and staff worked with the Haugh Performing Arts Center to highlight students.

"I applaud our students, faculty and staff for embracing challenges and finding new ways to create incredible performances," said Superintendent/President Perri.

"I am confident that the resilience and resourcefulness developed during this time will help prepare students for their future endeavors."

In addition to theatre arts productions, there have also been several

performances in the past several months from the Citrus Singers, Speakeasy, Night Shift and the Blue Note Orchestra. A total of 15 videos were produced, with each taking months to create.

And there's more on the way!

Later this spring, theatre arts will showcase Citrus College student Caitlin Griffin's "Mad to Live," a screenplay set during World War II, which will be performed online June 4-6. A virtual performance from the Citrus Singers is also in the works.

For more information about upcoming performances, visit [www.haughpac.com](http://www.haughpac.com).



Student Garrison Kirby's image is from a PHTO 205 high dynamic range architecture project. This work was produced in a remote learning environment.

# Virtual conference provides high school counselors with information, updates



Citrus College counselors connected with high school counselors and hosted breakout rooms to provide more information about the college.

Every spring, Citrus College organizes a special event designed to provide high school counselors throughout the region with up-to-date information about college programs and services. Despite the ongoing closure of the campus, this spring was no exception.

Using Zoom, the Counseling and Advisement Center joined forces with school relations and outreach to host the annual High School Counselor Conference. More than 70 high school counselors from 24 different high schools participated in the event, which took place the morning of Feb. 11.

“The purpose of the conference was to share information about Citrus College with local high school counselors, who could then bring that information back to the students they counsel to encourage them to come to Citrus College,” explained Dr. Nicole Smith, dean of counseling and the event emcee.

Of particular interest at this year’s virtual conference were the many ways in which Citrus College has been working to ensure academic excellence, robust student support services and sustained learning in a remote environment.

“This year’s high school counselor event was well-attended and provided a wonderful way to connect with area high schools while in our current remote environment,” said Superintendent/President Perri. “Special thanks to everyone who worked so diligently to make this event a success. It is yet another example of the college community’s creativity and resourcefulness during these unique times.”

# Student athletes recognized for academic excellence



The men’s basketball team has once again been named a CCCAA Scholar Team. Note: this photo was taken before the campus closed due to COVID-19.

While the ongoing global pandemic has created unique obstacles for the kinesiology and athletics division, Citrus College’s student athletes have continued to shine. In fact, they recently received recognition for their academic achievement.

In early March, it was announced that a record 143 Citrus College student athletes had earned Scholar Baller honors. This surpasses the previous record of 117 students, which was set during the 2019-2020 academic year.

An initiative that seeks to bridge the gap between education and sports, Scholar Ballers was first introduced at the college during the 2007-2008 academic year. To qualify as a Scholar Baller, a student athlete must maintain a GPA of 3.0 or higher.

“Having a record number of Scholar Ballers in such a trying time shows the resilience of our student athletes,” said Junior Domingo, dean of kinesiology and athletics. “We are very proud of the hard work they’re putting in, especially with not being able to compete.”

In addition to the Scholar Baller honors, the hard work of one particular team was also recognized by the California Community College Athletic Association (CCCAA). For the second time in a row and the third time in four years, the Citrus College’s men’s basketball team was selected as a CCCAA 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 – the average GPA of the 11 members on the 2019-2020 men’s basketball team was a 3.45.

“Juggling academic responsibilities with the demands of a sport is not easy. The stellar academic performance of these students, combined with their proven athletic abilities, is very impressive,” said Superintendent/President Perri. “On behalf of the college community, I congratulate each honoree and extend my sincere thanks to the coaches, support staff and many other individuals who helped facilitate their success.”

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