

Citrus VIEW

—LATEST NEWS FROM CITRUS COLLEGE—

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Governing board installs two new trustees, one returning trustee

The Citrus Community College District Board of Trustees (pictured, L-R): Trustee Steven Bluitt Flowers, Trustee Dr. Anthony Contreras, Trustee Dr. Cheryl Alexander, Trustee Laura J. Bollinger, Trustee Dr. Randa B. Wahbe and Dr. Greg Schulz, superintendent/president of Citrus College.

In December 2024, the Citrus Community College District Board of Trustees held its annual organizational meeting and two newly elected trustees, Steven Bluitt Flowers and Dr. Randa B. Wahbe, were sworn into office. Additionally, Laura J. Bollinger took the oath of office for her second term, having been reelected to the board.

Trustee Bluitt Flowers ran unopposed in November's election and now serves as the representative for trustee area 4, which encompasses Glendora and portions of San Dimas.

Trustee Wahbe was also elected to the board in November. She now represents trustee area 5, which serves the communities of Monrovia, Bradbury and portions of Duarte.

In addition to the election of two new board members, Trustee Bollinger ran unopposed and was reelected. She will continue serving Claremont and portions of Pomona and La Verne as the representative for trustee area 2.

"The Citrus College community is pleased to welcome Mr. Bluitt Flowers and Dr. Wahbe to the board of trustees. As an alumnus and decorated veteran of the U.S. Air Force, Trustee Bluitt Flowers brings a unique perspective that will enrich our campus. Likewise, Trustee Wahbe has an expertise in community college education that will be a tremendous asset in the years ahead," said Dr. Greg Schulz, superintendent/president of Citrus College.

"We are also happy to congratulate Trustee Bollinger on her reelection. Her experience and knowledge have been invaluable to our board, and we look forward to her continued service," he added.

During the meeting, trustees were also elected to the following positions for the term spanning Dec. 17, 2024, to Dec. 15, 2025: Trustee Cheryl Alexander will serve as board president, Trustee Bollinger will serve as board vice president and Trustee Anthony Contreras will serve as board clerk/secretary.

A Slice of Citrus History (110th Anniversary Edition): The college's first location was Dalton Hill, located near Cerritos Avenue and Sixth Street/Foothill Boulevard in Azusa. In January 1923, the college relocated to its present-day location on the corner of Foothill Boulevard and Ben Lomond (later renamed Barranca Avenue).

College welcomes new leaders



From left to right: Dr. My Chau, director of grants; Jeremy Clark, associate dean of natural and physical sciences; Marivel Ortiz-Sanchez, director of dual enrollment; Dr. Ana Quiroz, director of disabled student programs and services; and Elizabeth Velazquez, EOPS/CARE/NextUp supervisor.

My Chau, Ph.D., Director of Grants

Dr. Chau became director of grants on Jan. 1. With extensive experience in grant management and student success initiatives, she brings a wealth of expertise to her new role. Previously, Dr. Chau served as the college's STEM Center coordinator, grant program manager, assistant director of grants, and assistant director of student equity and achievement. She holds a bachelor's degree from Marymount University, and both a master's degree and a doctoral degree from Georgetown University.

Jeremy Clark, Associate Dean of Natural and Physical Sciences

Jeremy Clark brings over two decades of teaching and leadership experience to his new role as associate dean of natural and physical sciences. Previously, he served as a full-time faculty member in the automotive technology program. Clark has also served in key leadership roles, including Academic Senate president and Toyota Technical Education Network (T-TEN) program coordinator. He holds a bachelor's degree from CSU Long Beach and a master's degree from APU.

Marivel Ortiz-Sanchez, Director of Dual Enrollment

Marivel Ortiz-Sanchez has a strong background in education that is beneficial in her new role as director of dual enrollment. Previously, she served for two years as the college's EOPS/CARE/NextUp supervisor. Ortiz-Sanchez also held positions at

CSU Fullerton. She earned an associate degree from Mt. SAC, a bachelor's degree from UC Riverside, and master's degree from CSU Fullerton. She is currently completing a doctoral program at USC.

Ana Quiroz, Ed.D., Director of Disabled Student Programs and Services

A proud alumna, Dr. Quiroz recently returned to Citrus College as director of disabled student programs and services. Her professional journey began at the Claremont Unified School District, but she later transitioned to higher education. Most recently, Dr. Quiroz served as the director of Cal Poly Pomona's Disability Resource Center. She holds an associate degree from Citrus College, a bachelor's degree from Liberty University, a master's degree from APU and a doctorate from Cal Poly Pomona.

Elizabeth Velazquez, EOPS/CARE/NextUp Supervisor

A dedicated champion of student success, Elizabeth Velazquez brings a unique blend of vision, expertise and passion to her new role as EOPS/CARE/NextUp supervisor. Velazquez is not new to Citrus College. Most recently, she served as the college's CTE employment specialist in the career, technical and continuing education division. Additional professional experience includes roles at USC, Sacramento City College and CSU Sacramento. Velazquez holds both a bachelor's degree and master's degree from CSU Sacramento.

Committed volunteer, employee receives Irwindale honor



Audrey Zepeda (right) received the Citizen of the Year Award in January 2025 from Manuel Garcia, a member of the Irwindale City Council.

At her core, all Audrey Zepeda wants is give back to her community.

For years, Zepeda, an administrative clerk II with the college's student life and leadership development

team, has teamed up with other Irwindale residents – known as the Kindness Krew – to support those in need. From volunteering at local food banks to helping organize a bake sale to benefit breast cancer research, Zepeda is committed to ensuring her fellow community members are taken care of.

In January 2025, Zepeda's dedication and commitment were formally recognized when she was named the 2025 Citizen of the Year at the 45th annual Irwindale Chamber of Commerce Board Installation and Awards Bunch.

"It's an incredible feeling to know that the work I've done to support others has made a difference," Zepeda said of receiving the honor. "I never expected recognition for simply trying to give back, so this award is not just a personal achievement, it is also a reflection of the amazing people and causes I've been fortunate enough to be involved with."

Together with the Kindness Krew, Zepeda has volunteered at countless community events and helped collect items to give to those in need. The group has also raised funds to put together care kits.

Rosario Garcia, student life supervisor, wasn't surprised that Zepeda received the honor.

"Audrey is a kind person and always goes above and beyond to serve our students," Garcia said. "She is a true believer that real impact comes from serving others with kindness. I am very happy to have her on our team."

Looking to the future, Zepeda can't wait to keep volunteering with the Kindness Krew and support as many organizations as possible.

"I hope this recognition serves as a reminder that we all have the power to make a difference, no matter how big or small our actions may seem," she said.

Spring has sprung!

Spring arrived at Citrus College with a burst of sunshine and enthusiasm, promising another successful semester.

To help ensure a smooth start, college employees volunteered at information booths across campus during the first two days of classes. Thanks to this effort, students were able to find their classes, get answers to their questions and focus on their goals.

Lizeth Plascencia, a student majoring in film and TV, mentioned that she was looking forward to acquiring new skills.

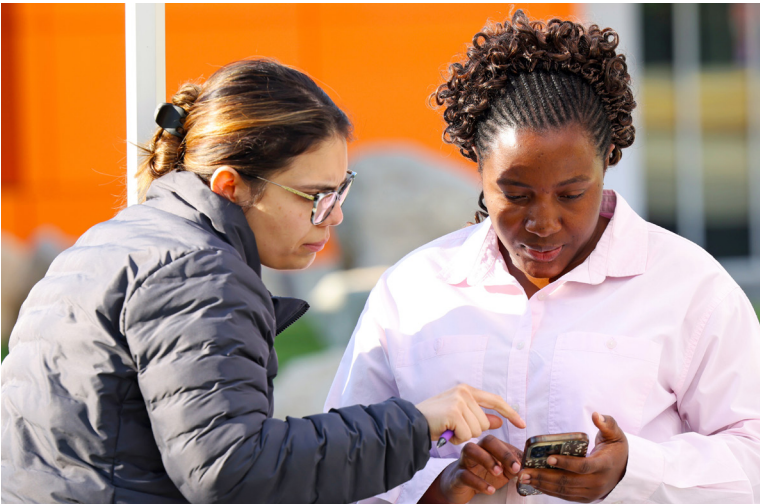
"This semester, I want to get more experience in the entertainment field because that is what I hope to do after college," she said.

Lilah Cervenka, a liberal arts student, shared that she is excited about graduating in June.

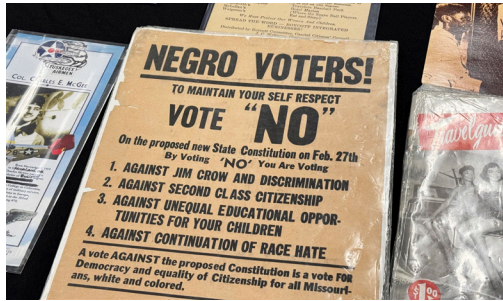
"I am very close to getting my associate of arts degree for transfer, so this is my last semester to get all my credits," she said. "My goal this semester is to get everything turned in on time and to finish strong."

Architecture student Noah Distaso noted that he is feeling optimistic about the weeks ahead.

"I am looking forward to learning a lot of amazing things," he said. "I must say that I'm excited."



Celebrating Black History Month with campuswide activities, resources



In February, the Citrus College community came together to honor Black History Month through a series of inspirational events and activities.

The monthlong commemoration kicked off on Feb. 13 with a screening of "Ailey," a 2021 film about the dance pioneer Alvin Ailey. In 1958, Ailey founded the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, one of the world's most respected dance companies.

On Feb. 19, several dozen Citrus College faculty, staff and students visited the Campus Center to see the Black History 101 Mobile Museum exhibit. Created by Dr. Khalid el-Hakim, the exhibit features dozens of historic and rare artifacts, such as letters, photos and newspaper clippings relating to slavery, politics, Jim Crow, civil rights and more.

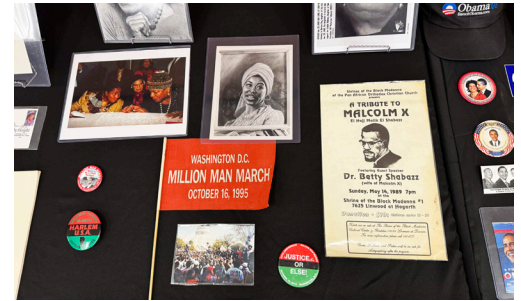


Dr. Khalid el-Hakim brought the Black History 101 Mobile Museum exhibit to Citrus College on Feb. 19.

During the lecture portion of the event, Dr. el-Hakim discussed his upbringing and how the mobile museum was created in 1995. Additionally, he talked about the personal importance of attending the Million Man March on Oct. 16, 1995.

Throughout the lecture, Dr. el-Hakim shared important events in his life, including a formative road trip to the American South. Additionally, he provided context on how it took many years for Martin Luther King Jr. Day to become a holiday, and how some U.S. states initially resisted celebrating it.

During the event, Dr. el-Hakim also shined a spotlight on other historical figures who played an important role in advancing civil rights, including Lena Horne, Harry Belafonte and A. Philip Randolph.



The monthlong Black History Month celebration also included a R&B and hip-hop bingo and mingle event on Feb. 24 that was hosted by the Black Faculty and Staff Association.

In addition, the college's office of diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility + shared a list of important community events, resources, books and films that honor Black and African American culture, history and accomplishments.

"I would like to thank the college's DEIA+ office for developing and supporting some extremely impactful events, activities and resources for Black History Month," said Superintendent/President Schulz. "I am also grateful to our campus community for supporting and participating in our celebrations."

Dedicated manager receives top honor from peers



Fred Diamond (left) was joined on stage by Carri Matsumoto (center), assistant vice chancellor at the Rancho Santiago Community College District, and Pablo Manzo (right), associate vice chancellor of the Los Rios Community College District, during the annual CCFC conference in November 2024.

Fred Diamond, director of facilities and construction at Citrus College, was recently honored for his commitment to enhancing facilities for community college students.

Diamond, who has worked at Citrus College since 2011, received the Paul Holmes Facilities Leadership Achievement Award from the Community College Facility Coalition (CCFC) at their annual conference in November 2024.

"I am deeply honored to receive the Paul Holmes Award and sincerely thank all of my colleagues for their support and dedication to higher education facilities," Diamond said. "Citrus College is a wonderful institution that embraces teamwork, exemplary education and support of students."

Diamond is the second Citrus College employee to receive the award. Carol Horton, past vice president of finance and administrative services, was one of two honorees in 2017.

Since joining Citrus College, Diamond has made a significant impact on campus. During his tenure, he has overseen the completion of the Measure G capital construction program and is now overseeing the Measure Y program.

In this capacity, he has managed the construction projects for several large buildings on campus, including Administration, Campus Center, Educational Development Center, Hayden Hall and Visual Arts, among others.

Respected by his colleagues for his work ethic and dedication, Diamond is known for bringing people together for the common goal of supporting students.

A resource to other facilities colleagues throughout the state, he has served as an educator at the CCFC, the Construction Specifications Institute (CSI) and California's Coalition for Adequate School Housing leadership institutes, which support the educational system's future facility leaders.

Diamond was also on the CCFC Board of Directors, including one year as chair. Additionally, he is chair of the Southern California Facilities Officers group, and he also served on the boards of the Inland Empire Chapter of CSI and the American Construction Inspectors Association.

"On behalf of the entire campus community, I want to congratulate Mr. Diamond on this incredible achievement," said Superintendent/President Schulz. "Not only is Fred a driven and generous colleague, he is also a collaborative leader who will stop at nothing to provide our students with the best and most well-equipped facilities."

Television personality to serve as gala emcee

It's almost showtime! Mark L. Walberg, host of the popular TV shows "Temptation Island" and "Antiques Roadshow," will soon dazzle as the emcee of the Citrus College 110th anniversary gala.

Themed "Celebrating the Magic of Citrus," this special event will be held on the Haugh Performing Arts Center stage on Saturday, March 22. In addition to a celebrity emcee, the festivities will include a cocktail reception, a delicious dinner, musical performances and appearances by magicians (including two Citrus College faculty members!).

"We are thrilled to reach this major milestone in Citrus College history and have planned a celebration that will be truly unforgettable," said Superintendent/President Schulz. "With talented performers, fine dining and an iconic venue, it promises to be a notable evening. We're especially grateful to have Mark L. Walberg on board to add to the magic."



Throughout the evening, guests will be treated to award-winning entertainment and inspiring student success stories. They will also have the opportunity to bid on live and silent auction items. All proceeds will be used to support student scholars, as well as the college's programs and services.

"An engaged campus community, generous donors, local businesses and outstanding alumni have all made it possible for Citrus College to adapt and evolve for over a century," Superintendent/President Schulz added. "While our gala is focused on commemorating this legacy of success, it will also celebrate the Citrus College of tomorrow."

Tickets to the gala are still available. Individuals and groups looking to attend or sponsor the event can choose from a variety of packages, the details of which can be found at www.citruscollege.edu/anniversarygala.

Mark L. Walberg will be emcee the Citrus College 110th anniversary celebration on March 22.

Nursing programs use virtual reality to enhance learning



Two Citrus College nursing students participate in a virtual reality training exercise in December 2024.

On a recent Friday afternoon, two Citrus College nursing students donned virtual reality headsets and began a cutting-edge training exercise.

For approximately 10 minutes, the students took part in a scenario where a virtual patient showed signs of having a heart attack. In turn, they were tasked with interacting with the patient and their family, asking questions, checking vitals and completing a head-to-toe assessment.

The demonstration was part of the college's VR/Sim Day, which showcased some of the new technology being used by the college's associate degree in nursing (ADN) and vocational nursing (VN) programs.

"This immersive learning experience provides realistic practice opportunities for students in a safe

environment," said Salima Allahbachayo, DNP, FNP-BC, RN, director of health sciences at Citrus College. "Through increased engagement, students practice their psychomotor skills, problem-solving skills and critical-thinking skills, thereby developing confidence in providing safe and competent care."

During the exercise, a staff member ran the simulation and chose what the virtual patient was going to say to the students, making each simulation slightly different from one to the next.

"I think it's a really good learning experience," said VN student Charlize Estrada after removing her headset.

While the virtual reality demonstration was taking place, students in a different room participated in a simulation lab experience.

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