

CitrusVIEW

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PTK chapter triumphs with top honors

Pictured (L-R): Areej Oasqas, Beta Nu Eta advisor; Alex Algan, chapter president; Cory Kanemoto, chapter vice president; and Celeste Medina, chapter member.

The Citrus College Beta Nu Eta chapter of the Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society has once again demonstrated its commitment to excellence, earning multiple awards and recognitions during the 2024-2025 academic year.

Beta Nu Eta garnered more than 20 honors, including being named a 2025 Five Star Chapter. This international designation is given to those chapters that demonstrate excellence in the areas of community service, campus involvement, foundation support, scholarship and international awareness. The chapter also received Phi Theta Kappa's Top 100 Chapter status, an international recognition earned by chapters that consistently excel in areas like the Hallmark Awards and Honors in Action program.

"I am incredibly proud of our Beta Nu Eta students and their outstanding achievements this year," said Dr. Greg Schulz, superintendent/president of Citrus College. "Their passion for learning, leadership and service to others reflects the very best of our college's spirit and values."

Several members of Beta Nu Eta have also received individual honors.

Cory Kanemoto, chapter vice president, and Anthony Mardoyan, chapter secretary, were among 110 California community college students to be named to the Community College League of California's PTK All-California Academic Honor Roll. They were selected based on their grades, leadership and community service.

Advisor Areej Oasqas and counselor Eileen Sin also received PTK honors. Oasqas was presented with the 2025 Distinguished Advisor Award, while Sin was awarded the Nevada/California region's Faculty Recognition Award.

"Professor Oasqas is simply the most committed advisor Beta Nu Eta has ever had. She goes above and beyond, even when she is managing in her own obligations," said Alex Algan, chapter president. "This is why we were so enthusiastic about nominating her for this honor. As far as I'm concerned, we could not have a more dedicated advisor to help guide us."

Rounding out Beta Nu Eta's 2024-2025 recognitions were an honorable mention in the 2024 Honors Case Study Challenge and multiple regional chapter awards.

A Slice of Citrus History (110th Anniversary Edition): The first sports championship in Citrus College history was the 1950 baseball team.

They lost nine of their first 10 games, but won their last five for the title. The final game against Palomar College went 10 innings, and the Fighting Owls won 8-7.

Two students in the running for life-changing scholarship



Citrus College students JiaJie Yang (left) and Celine Ama (right).

Citrus College computer science majors Celine Ama and JiaJie Yang are semifinalists for the prestigious Cooke Undergraduate Transfer Scholarship. They have been selected from a highly competitive pool of nearly 1,600 applicants.

According to the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation, the scholarship aims to help community college students who have demonstrated exceptional academic ability, leadership and service to transfer to four-year institutions and avoid student debt. The award can provide as much as \$55,000 per year for two to three years. Finalists are expected to be announced this month.

Celine Ama

For Celine Ama, being recognized as a semifinalist for the 2025 Cooke Undergraduate Transfer Scholarship is a ray of hope. "Seeing my name on the list was surreal. Being a semifinalist means the world to me. It feels like the first step in building my future from the ground up," she said. "This recognition reassures me that hard work truly pays off."

Celine's accomplishment is even more significant when you consider the path she took to get to Citrus College. After graduating from Al-Amal Catholic School in Aleppo, Syria, in 2022, she relocated to the United States. "When I moved here, my cousins recommended I consider enrolling in Citrus College because of its strong reputation," she said. "It turned out to be the perfect place to start my academic journey."

On track to graduate this spring, Celine hopes to transfer to a four-year university in the fall. She has already been accepted to several California State University campuses and is currently waiting to hear back from additional University of California institutions. As a computer science major, her ultimate goal is to pursue a career in technology. "I hope to work in tech in a way that helps others," she said. "I want to use technology as a tool for positive impact."

As she prepares for the next step on her academic journey, Celine says that Citrus College will always be an important part of her story. "This has been an incredible experience," she said. "I've overcome 10 years of war and displacement, and I'm grateful to Citrus College for making me feel at home. The support I've received here has been life changing."

JiaJie Yang

Being selected as a semifinalist for the 2025 Cooke Undergraduate Transfer Scholarship is a source of inspiration for JiaJie Yang. "Receiving recognition from such a prestigious organization validates all the hard work I've put in so far," he said. "It is an honor to be listed among other scholars across the nation. This motivates me to keep striving to be better."

The drive to continuously improve is what brought JiaJie to Citrus College. After graduating from high school overseas, he began exploring colleges in California. "I applied to quite a few and received admission from all of them," he said. "Ultimately, I chose to enroll at Citrus because of its outstanding international student transfer rate."

Since enrolling, JiaJie has thrived. "Overall, my time at Citrus has been nothing short of amazing," he said. "I have really enjoyed each and every class that I've taken so far. I've learned so many new things from my instructors and peers. I've also had the opportunity to be active on campus, which has been super rewarding and has allowed me to create valuable connections with others."

JiaJie will be graduating at the end of the spring 2025 semester. He plans on transferring to a four-year university and hopes to pursue a career in the field of artificial intelligence, machine learning and natural language processing. "It feels bittersweet knowing that I have only spent a year here, but I'm grateful for every moment I have had and every person who has been part of my academic journey. Without them, I would not have been able to be who I am today," he said. "No matter where life takes me, I'll always cherish my time at Citrus College."

Student presents deathcore research at honors symposium

Hamza El Lahib believes that some of the most meaningful research comes from topics that reflect your identity, passions or lived experiences. This perspective can be seen in a project he recently presented at an Honors Research Symposium student conference at UC Berkeley.

According to Hamza, he chose the topic for his project, "Screams of Change: Deathcore's Revival and Its Potential for Youth Mobilization," because it is at the intersection of two of his interests: music and politics. His research involved an exploration of the deathcore music scene, revealing that its longevity was threatened.

"Despite being a medium for social and political critique, the scene faces stigma and structural challenges," he said. "Proposed solutions include interdisciplinary advocacy and support for independent venues through grants or repurposing public spaces."

Hamza said he was excited to present these findings at the symposium.

"The selection process was competitive, with 248 proposals submitted and about 100 accepted. So, participating in the symposium is an honor and a milestone," he said. "It validates the cultural and political importance of topics that are often overlooked in academic spaces, like underground music and youth subcultures, and it provided me a platform to share my experience growing up and engaging with similar scenes."



Hamza El Lahib will be graduating from Citrus College this spring.

An interest in music is what originally introduced Hamza to Citrus College in 2022. As a sophomore at Claremont High School, he enrolled in a dual enrollment History of Rock 'N' Roll class. He enjoyed it so much that he decided to take more classes.

Two years later, Hamza graduated from high school earlier than expected. Simultaneously, he concluded his first semester as a part of the Citrus College Honors Transfer program. He was also elected a senator for the Associated Students of Citrus College.

"Since then, I've remained academically focused, making the President's List and maintaining 15+ units each semester," he said.

Hamza will earn an Associate Degree for Transfer in Political Science this June. He hopes to transfer to a University of California campus to complete his bachelor's degree. His ultimate goals are to earn a master's degree in political science or international relations and to pursue a career in education.

As he prepares for the next step in his academic journey, Hamza has advice for those who are just starting out:

"Take advantage of the resources Citrus College offers," he said. "Take initiative with your instructors and let them know about your interests, because they will advocate for you and ensure you are supported in your goals."

Alumna co-authors comprehensive Black history book



Author Denicia Crutcher-Lyons graduated from Citrus College in 2009.

As the pages of "The Chronicle of Heroes: Black Contributions to America" turn, the stories of countless individuals who helped shape the history of the United States come to life.

Denicia Crutcher-Lyons, the book's co-author, spent two years meticulously researching and crafting a narrative that would honor the triumphs and struggles of Black Americans. The result is a book that profiles 740 trailblazers, including abolitionists, inventors, explorers, educators, political leaders, activists and more.

Surprisingly, Crutcher-Lyons said she never expected to become a researcher and author. When she enrolled at Citrus College in her mid-30s, her primary goal was to create a better life for her daughters. However, she quickly became immersed in the campus community. Not only did she enroll her toddler in the college's child development center, she also joined clubs, participated in the college's dance company and took part in student activities.

"I was involved in several events and went to all the home football games. My girls even enjoyed the activities," she said. "In fact, during the 2008 football season, I was chosen as the college's homecoming queen!"

With the help of her Citrus College counselor, Crutcher-Lyons also became part of the Extended Opportunity Programs and Services (EOPS) program. She would go on to work in the EOPS office as a student worker.

"I received amazing support from everyone in the office," she said. "Serving as a student worker provided me with flexibility that worked with my class schedule and my daughters' schooling."

After graduating with an associate degree in mathematics and another in fine arts, Crutcher-Lyons transferred to Nevada State University. It was there that she discovered a passion for history, which would ultimately lead her to co-author her book.

According to Crutcher-Lyons, this accomplishment wouldn't have been possible without Citrus College.

"Citrus taught me that the sky was the limit, and that it was possible for dreams to come true as long as you never give up on yourself or your goals," she said. "After graduating from Citrus College, I truly believed I could do anything I put my mind to."

The Chronicle of HEROES

Black Contributions to America



Sandra K. Yocum and Denicia Crutcher-Lyons



Athletics celebrates second *Hall of Fame* class



More than 100 campus community members gathered on April 11 to congratulate and welcome nine individuals and one team into the Citrus College Athletics Hall of Fame.



**Laura Bermudez,
Cross Country/Track**

Bermudez competed on the cross country and track teams from 1993 to 1995. While at Citrus College, she was named WSC Runner of the Year in 1994 after winning the WSC Championship and 3C2A State Championship. After Citrus College, Bermudez transferred to CSU Los Angeles, finishing second in both the CCAA and NCAA West Region track and field championships.



Jackie Boxley, Softball (Coach)

Boxley coached the softball team for 16 seasons: from 2005 to 2017, and 2020 to 2022. She holds the program record for most all-time wins. As coach, Boxley led teams to 10 playoff appearances and three conference championships.

Athletics celebrates second Hall of Fame class



Skip Clapood, Baseball (Coach)

As coach of the men's baseball team, Clapood was in a league of his own. With 772 career wins from 1972 to 2002, he ranks first all-time in Citrus College baseball history and third all-time in the state. During his managerial career, Clapood won 14 conference championships and saw more than 150 of his players get drafted, with 14 going on to play in Major League Baseball.



Ed Conly, Administrator/Coach

Conly's career at Citrus College spanned nearly five decades. He coached the college's track and field and cross-country teams from 1952 to 1964 before teaching and serving as an athletics administrator from 1964 to 1989.

**Steve Handy and Camie Kimball, Conly's daughter, were in attendance on behalf of the late Conly.*



Quinton Ganther, Football

Ganther played for the Owls from 2002 to 2003, where he set records for most single season (1,490) and career rushing yards (2,767). In 2004 and 2005, he played for the University of Utah, finishing in the top 12 for single season rushing yards as a senior. He was drafted by the Tennessee Titans in 2006 and spent six seasons in the NFL.



Dave Hostetler, Baseball

Hostetler played on the baseball team from 1975 to 1976. His records of career RBIs (103) and single-game RBIs (8) still hold nearly 50 years later. After Citrus College, Hostetler played for USC on an athletic scholarship and was part of the 1978 College World Series championship team. After college, he was drafted by the Montreal Expos in 1978 and played five seasons in the majors.



Tammy Knott-Silva, Women's Volleyball/Basketball

Knott-Silva was a three-sport athlete at Citrus College. From 1996 to 1997, she competed in volleyball, basketball, and track and field. She was the Foothill Conference MVP as a freshman after leading the state in kills and was awarded all-conference volleyball honors as a sophomore. Knott-Silva ranks fourth in program history for kills in a season and third in total blocks.



Jade Nua, Softball

Nua played on the softball team from 2016 to 2017. Selected All-WSC as a freshman, they picked up three more honors as a sophomore – WSC Player of the Year, All-State and All-American. Nua also holds multiple single season records including batting average (.582), RBIs (62) and runs scored (57). They also hold several other career records at Citrus College, including homeruns (19), runs (80) and RBIs (84).



Jerry Wooden, Men's Water Polo

Wooden competed for the men's water polo team in 1990 and 1991. He ranks in the top 10 in nine different statistical categories. After being named the Foothill Conference MVP and All-American at Citrus College, Wooden transferred to USC on an athletic scholarship and played two seasons, earning All-American status and holding the single-game goals record (8) for nearly 30 years.



2008 Men's Basketball Team

One of the greatest teams in college history, the 2008 squad went 35-1 and became the second team in Citrus College history to win a state championship. All eight sophomores on the team earned athletic scholarships. Two coaches from the team are currently leading Division I basketball programs, including Rick Croy (California Baptist University) and Chris Acker (CSU Long Beach).

Citrus College partners with Arizona State University to streamline transfer pathway



Cory Kutsch graduated from Citrus College in June 2022 with associate degrees in psychology and sociology. He then transferred to ASU and is currently a forensic psychology major in their New College of Interdisciplinary Arts and Sciences.

Thanks to a new partnership, it's becoming easier for an Owl to become a Sun Devil.

Recently, Citrus College and Arizona State University (ASU) teamed up to provide students with a seamless transfer experience through the MyPath2ASU program. Citrus College students looking to transfer to ASU are now able to take the necessary steps – starting at the beginning of their college career – to successfully plan their transfer.

As a result of the collaboration, students will get personalized guidance through more than 400 course-by-course guided pathways to ASU online and in-person degree programs. This will help to ensure Citrus College students select classes that align with their desired ASU major while also minimizing credit loss.

The partnership also provides guaranteed general admission to ASU and admission into a student's MyPath2ASU major choice if all requirements are satisfied. While Citrus College students are participating in MyPath2ASU, they will also receive personalized communications from ASU to support academic growth and community engagement.

"Citrus College is thrilled to partner with ASU to make it easier for our students to get guaranteed admission to one of the nation's leading educational institutions," said Superintendent/President Schulz. "With MyPath2ASU, Citrus College students will be able to clearly understand what steps they need to complete to successfully transfer to ASU. Once at the university, they will receive a world-class education that will prepare them well for future academic and professional endeavors."

Citrus College honored for supporting student-veterans



The Veterans Success Center is currently located in P3 on the eastern end of campus.

For the past two decades, the Veterans Success Center has been celebrated for its commitment to student-veterans and their families.

Last month, VIQTORY, a veteran-owned small business, once again recognized Citrus College as a Military Friendly School and Military Spouse Friendly School.

Each year, VIQTORY honors colleges and universities from across the country with these distinctions, which are ascertained through public data sources and responses from a proprietary survey. Based on this year's score, Citrus College was placed in the Silver category.

The commitment to serving student-veterans and their families is central to the work of the staff at the Veterans Success Center, which is led Veterans Success Center Director Maria Buffo.

Under Buffo's command, a team of staff members, counselors and interns work tirelessly to support student-veterans and their transition from the military to higher education. In addition to providing them with a comfortable place to spend time, the Veterans Success Center staff also connects student-veterans with resources, academic counseling and more.

"On behalf of the campus community, I want to thank Director Buffo and the dedicated staff of the Veterans Success Center for the incredible work they do to support our student-veterans and their families," said Superintendent/President Schulz. "We are incredibly proud of our Veterans Success Center, which has helped hundreds of student-veterans throughout the years reach their academic and professional goals."

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