A Message from the 50th Anniversary Honorary Committee Co-Chairs

For 50 years, Cerritos College has been changing the lives of its students by enabling them to meet their educational goals. The college’s commitment to excellence is well worth celebrating on any occasion, and especially during its golden anniversary. But this 50th anniversary wouldn’t be happening without the generous support and contributions of the college’s neighboring communities, numerous faculty and staff members, and our many students.

As we lead the campus in highlighting 50 years of achievement, it’s our hope to highlight those who have found success in reaching their goals through our academic and vocational programs. In many cases, students getting their start here at Cerritos College return to their alma mater or their community to give back perhaps more than any person who studied elsewhere.

We are so very proud of the people who are Cerritos College, and we look forward to celebrating the past 50 years as well as the next 50 years of growth, success and opportunity.

Sincerely,

Dr. Ed Bloomfield
Retired Faculty Member

Dr. Wilford Michael
Former College President
EXPERIMENTAL GROWTH

By the end of 1959, eight buildings had been completed on campus, and funds were made available to provide the remaining facilities to accommodate a student body of 3,500 students. By 1961 the campus included 95 acres, and its permanent buildings brought the value of the college to $16 million. By July 1965, district population was 400,000. This would be the year that, beyond the bravest expectations of everyone connected with Cerritos College, enrollment would exceed 10,000 students.

The college acquired the “South 40” acres in 1966, enlarging the campus to 135 acres, and by the 1968-69 school year, the campus grew to include 18 buildings with a student enrollment of more than 11,000.

ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

With the campus complete for the time being, the administration and board of trustees turned to building the excellence of the academic programs, which had a strong foundation. Innovation in satellite courses, televised instruction, open-entry classes and the move into audio-visual instruction marked the coming decade.

In 1972, the student population reached 17,000. The next year, 18,000 students attended classes. By 1975, nearly 23,000 students were enrolled in courses, and growing pains brought expansion to the campus, which continued to grow and meet the demands of the surrounding communities.

By its 25th anniversary in 1980, Cerritos College had educated nearly 250,000 students since it first opened its doors at Excelsior High School. Course offerings had expanded, a satellite campus program had been implemented and the faculty and staff had grown as the community’s needs increased. Cerritos College received its first-ever Federal Title III Grant in 1986. The grant, which went toward creating and expanding what is now the learning resource center, was in the amount of $500,000 renewable for five years, totaling $2.5 million.

INCREASED ACCESS

During more recent years, the college has undergone physical renovations. In 1994, the Wilford Michael Library and Learning Resource Center (LRC) underwent major renovation and expansion. The library expanded from 22,000 square feet to more than 40,000 square feet. The old card catalog was replaced with an automated online system as a result of a major financial gift by the Associated Students of Cerritos College (ASCC). A modern teleconference center and learning assistance lab were added to the east wing of the Learning Resource Center.

The Student Center was renovated in 1995, funded by a three-way partnership between the ASCC, the college district and the state. The renovation included a four-restaurante court with both indoor and outdoor casual dining for students. In fall of 1998, Cerritos College opened the doors to the “One-Stop Student Services Center,” a central hub of all student services and enrollment activities. The new center houses student services including admissions and records, academic counseling, financial aid, the Scholars’ Honor Program, veterans’ affairs, EOPS (Extended Opportunity Programs and Services) and university transfer assistance.

Also in the fall of 1998, the second phase of the Learning Resource Center opened, featuring a computer lab with more than 500 high-speed personal computers and 699 data ports. The dual-level computer labs provide students with access to the latest software, high-speed Internet and dedicated labs for reading, math, English and foreign languages.

A NEW MILLENNIUM WELCOME

With the turn of the millennium, expansion began to take on a new face at Cerritos College. Instead of adding on to the campus as in the past, Cerritos College began to develop global partnerships with the aid of technology. This became extremely beneficial to education in the aftermath of September 11, 2001, when pursuing cross-cultural educational opportunities became more challenging.

In late 1999, a partnership began between Cerritos College and the University of Wisconsin-Stout (UW-Stout). The two colleges began to hold joint class sessions in real time with the use of a TV screen and the Internet.

In 2003, the concept of the virtual classroom once again expanded, and Cerritos College entered into a similar partnership with International Pacific College (IPC) in New Zealand. For the first time ever at Cerritos College, two hemispheres were connected in real-time and students were able to participate in multi-national approaches to world history.

With a student body of 24,000 in 2003, and, with its 50th anniversary nearing, the board of trustees asked the surrounding district communities to vote “yes” on a $210 million bond measure for campus modernization. The community supported this measure, and the general obligation bond was approved in March 2004. Groundbreaking on the first G.O. Bond construction project, a similar partnership with International Pacific College and the University of Wisconsin-Stout, was held in September of 2004, and in 2005, the college formally dedicated the new Health Occupations Skills Lab, (built with budgeted funding). The new 23,000-square-foot facility boasts 25 hospital beds, an 18 exam table clinic, a mock pharmacy fronted by a service counter donated by Longs Drugs, a speech language pathology clinic with seven therapy cubicles, and a computer lab.

WHAT’S NEXT?

Following every great success, there lingers the question, “what’s next?” Success at Cerritos College is no different.

With President Noelia Velas at the helm, Cerritos College’s board is moving forward in strategic planning for the college that will assure excellence and help it weather uncertainties with regard to the state’s budget in future years. To revitalize the college’s purpose, the board adopted a revised mission statement: The Cerritos College mission is to serve the community by building futures through learning.

The board of trustees, faculty, staff, administration and students all continue to be part of a shared approach to serving the community by building students’ futures through enhanced learning opportunities, hands-on training and equal access for all.

As education becomes more necessary nationwide in securing a reasonable standard of living, the next 50 years hold for community colleges—and Cerritos College specifically—the challenge of providing unsurpassed excellence, growth and service to the community. Those of us presently involved with the Cerritos College campus ask that you join us as we, standing on the shoulders of those who came before us, set the course for the future of Cerritos College.
What does Cerritos College Mean to You?

We asked a few folks whose experiences include involvement with Cerritos College to help celebrate the college’s 50th anniversary by sharing their personal reflections of the college and its community.

Paul Rojo, Cerritos College Alum
2002 recipient of the Pelias Scholarship

Help support the next 50 years at Cerritos College by making a life-changing education possible for a Cerritos College student. With your gift to the Cerritos College 50th Anniversary Scholarship Fund, you’ll help the Cerritos College Foundation make college a reality for well-deserving students. Please look for the scholarship contribution envelope included in this publication or, for a complete list of foundation scholarships, visit www.cerritos.edu/cef.

Julia Emerson
Cerritos College Alum, class of 1979
Public Affairs Manager at Southern California Gas Company

“Cerritos College, for me, was a combination of fun, friendships and the chance to learn from great teachers. If I had realized at the time how much Cerritos, in all its aspects, would come to shape my career and my life, I would have been stunned.”

James Towns
Cerritos College Alum, class of 1994
2003-04 ASCC President and Cal State Dominguez Hills student

“Cerritos College was a life preserver at a time when the world was not calm for me, and I was a small fish in a big ocean. Cerritos College literally saved my life.”

Ana Baez
Cerritos College Alum, class of 2005
PACE (Program for Adult College through Education)

“Cerritos College has helped me develop and grow academically, and I truly feel like a better person with clearer perspectives and ideas. I have an extraordinary sense of accomplishment and confidence.”

Phillip C. Rodriguez
Cerritos College Alum, class of 1967
Director of Student Affairs and faculty member

“I myself am a product of Cerritos College, which makes my time in the classroom and in directing financial aid a labor that comes from my love for teaching and learning. When I think of Cerritos College, I am filled with gratitude for Bernice Blake, my English professor who has since retired. She encouraged me through my struggles in remedial classes and really threw me an academic lifeline.”

Sherrill L. Moses
Retired Cerritos College Faculty Member and former La Mirada City Council member

“It is community-oriented, offering a wide and varied academic and vocational education to a diverse student body, which enhances the quality of both the students and the community. Another thing I like about Cerritos College is its very able and professional faculty.”

Bernice Watson
Cerritos College Alum, class of 1977
25-year Cerritos College employee as Instructional Media Production Specialist

“When I think of Cerritos College, I think of the people. It’s like an extended family. I came here right out of college, and so I really grew up with the college.”

Cerritos College will celebrate its 50th anniversary by hosting several special events during the coming months. August 1 will feature the Cerritos College Foundation’s 20th annual golf tournament at Friendly Hills Country Club in Whittier. Tournament proceeds will help support students’ academic excellence through awards, scholarships and recognition. Faculty and staff on campus will be welcomed back with the 50th Anniversary Convocation Luncheon on Thursday, September 29. The event will feature California Community Colleges Chancellor Mark Drummmond as guest speaker. A 50th Anniversary Gala Dinner and Silent Auction will be held Friday, October 21, 2005, at the Norwalk Marriott Hotel. The $75-per-plate evening will consist of a silent auction, dinner and program, with all proceeds benefiting the 50th Anniversary Scholarship Fund. Dr. Ed Bloomfield, co-chair of the 50th Anniversary Honorary Committee and former Cerritos College faculty member, will emcee the program.

The celebration continues on October 22, as the college welcomes back alumni and retirees to reminisce and get re-acquainted at homecoming. The Cerritos College Falcons play the Golden West College Rustlers, a new homecoming queen will be crowned and Freddie and Frieda Falcon will make a special appearance.

Be sure to mark your calendar early with these and other campus events to help Cerritos College celebrate its milestone year. For more event details, please see the calendar of events on the back cover of this publication or visit www.cerritos.edu/50.
Success Carries Athletics to Next 50 Years

1950s Football was the first intercollegiate sport on campus and the football fieldhouse was the first building to be built. In its first game, the Falcons traveled to Ogden, Utah to defeat Weber College, 55-7 on September 20, 1957. After one year of competition, the baseball team won their first conference title, while the gymnastics fieldhouse was built and the college went on to feature men’s basketball and wrestling teams, followed by the tennis courts and swimming pools.

1960s The baseball team won the first of its state-record nine state championships in 1966, with the men’s water polo team and men’s basketball team each winning their first state title. During the course of three seasons (1965-67), the baseball team won 60 games in a row, including a 48-game season in 1966. All while the wrestling team finished among the top three teams in the state championships three times during this decade. The college continued to grow, with swimming, badminton, archery and gymnastics being added to the list of team sports.

1970s The baseball team became the first community college team to win three state championships in a row (1973-75) and five in the decade. The wrestling team won its first state championship during the 1973-74 season, while in 1979, the softball team and coed badminton team won state championships. The college now offered sports such as women’s volleyball, tennis, track and field, men’s soccer and cross country.

1980s Eight more state championships came during the 80s, while 23 conference championships were won among the college’s 18 sports. The baseball team captured three titles (1983, 1985, 1987), while women’s track and field won a championship in 1981, and women’s tennis picked up a title in 1983. Men’s basketball won in 1983 and the wrestling team won the dual-meet title in 1985. The volleyball team reached the state championships in the final two years of the decade.

1990s Both men’s basketball and wrestling teams won two state championships in the 90s, while the women’s volleyball team finally won championship in 1992. The women’s volleyball team was a mainstay in the state championship match, reaching the finals three out of four years from 1991-94. The wrestling team placed second in the state championships five other times in this decade, while the women’s basketball team was a state semi-finalist twice. During the 90s, the college introduced women’s soccer and women’s water polo.

2000s Several new teams began to reach state prominence during the most recent five years, as the men’s water polo and men’s soccer teams reached the state championships in 2004. The women’s volleyball team won the conference championship in 2005 and 2004, while the women’s track and field team placed second in the state championships in 2015, after winning the Southern California championship. During the 2004-05 academic year, eight Falcon teams won conference championships, while the college placed eighth in the state’s supremacy competition.

With all of this success, the college has seen countless student athletes who have gone on to national prominence. A brief list of alumni includes:

- Joe Gibbs: Falcon football player – Washington Redskins head coach and National Football League Hall of Fame Inductee
- Wally Kincade: Falcon baseball coach – named National College Baseball Coach of the Century
- Marcello Balboa: Falcon soccer player – captain of the U.S. National Soccer Team and Inducted into the National Soccer Hall of Fame

Faculty Over the Years: A Tradition of Excellence

Dr. John Boyle

Boyle holds a bachelor’s and a master’s degree from the University of California, Santa Barbara. He has been part of the Cerritos College faculty since 1974. During his tenure, his courses have included environmental studies in Death Valley, the eastern Sierra Nevada Mountains, coastal tide pools and the Colorado Desert. He has helped author grants to secure equipment for department and served for a period as interim vice president of student affairs when the college administration needed him. Boyle believes “the most rewarding aspect of working at Cerritos College is the opportunity to make a profoundly positive impact upon the lives of students.”

Dr. Bob Colgan

Colgan is chair of the woodworking manufacturing technology department. He holds an associate’s degree from Fullerton College and a bachelor’s degree from CSULB and has been part of the Cerritos College faculty since 1993. He is also a business owner and is licensed by state of California in cabinetmaking and millwork.

In 2000, he received both the “Educator of the Year” award from the Woodworking Machinery Industry Association and the “PostSecondary Educator of the Year” award from the Los Angeles County Industrial Technology Education Association. Colgan says he is “passionate about teaching and building, whether it’s a chair, a winning team or the finest woodworking program in the country.”

Dr. Curtis Paxman

Paxman is director and founder of Cerritos College Teacher TRAC, a partnership with California State University Long Beach. She holds a bachelor’s degree and a master’s degree from CSULB. She’s been a Cerritos College faculty member since 1985. In 1999, she received the Association of Community College Trustees, “Outstanding Faculty Member of the Year" award, and in 2005, she received the CSULB “Distinguished Alumni” award. During her career, Parsons has secured more than $2.5 million in state and federal grants. She, along with her Teacher TRAC colleagues, celebrates the “insightful perspectives brought to the teaching profession by students who complete the Teacher TRAC program.”

Nursing Program has Long History of Successful Graduates

Since that first class of graduates, the program has successfully launched thousands of nurses into their careers. The program has a 70 percent retention rate, with more than 80 percent of graduates passing the national nursing board exams on their first attempt.

With the largest number of the Student Nurses’ Association of California, division 11, no Cerritos College students were elected to the association’s top leadership offices— testament of the respect granted them by their peers.