Dear Campus Colleagues,

Here’s the latest news that you might want to know something about.

1. **Interim Research and Planning Director:** Last Wednesday, the Board of Trustees voted to hire Dr. Chris Myers as Interim Director of Research and Planning. Dr. Myers recently retired as Director of Institutional Research and Planning from Hartnell College in Salinas, California, after 14 years in that position. Prior to that, he served as Director of Institutional Research for Pima Community College in Tucson, Arizona, and as Research Evaluator/Program Analyst for the Tucson Unified School District. He received his Ph.D. in educational psychology from the University of Arizona. Dr. Myers will begin work at Cerritos College on March 2, 2009. Please join me in welcoming him.

2. **Budget News:** You have probably read that the state has finally approved a budget for the rest of 2008-09 and a tentative budget for 2009-10. Though budgets for community colleges are not good by any definition, they could have been much worse. Our lobbying and letters probably kept us from worse cuts than we could have experienced. However, the 2009-10 budget is dependent on several ballot initiatives that will go before voters in May as well as the level of income tax receipts in April. Interim Vice President of Business Services Jim Albanese will be making presentations on this updated budget information at the March 4, 2009 Board of Trustees meeting as well as at the Planning and Budget Committee meeting on March 5 at 2 p.m. Both meetings are in the Board room. You’re welcome to attend either of these meetings if you want more information about the budget.

3. **Surveys:** I want to thank all of you who responded to the survey about planning which recently was distributed electronically. And I want to remind everyone that there’s still time to complete the survey on communication, collaboration, empowerment, and other issues that is due Thursday, March 5. A big thank you should also go to the Information Technology (IT) staff for getting the surveys online so quickly and efficiently. Once the data for each survey has been analyzed, I’ll share the results in a future letter.

4. **ARCC Data; All-Faculty Meeting:** Every year, the chancellor’s office compiles data about the student success rates for all 109 California community colleges in a report called Accountability Reporting for Community Colleges (ARCC). College data is tracked over three reporting periods for seven different measures: (1) student progress and achievement; (2) percent of students who earned 30 units; (3) persistence; (4) annual successful course completion for vocational courses; (5) annual successful course completion for basic skills courses; (6) ESL improvement; and (7) basic skills improvement. An eighth measure will be introduced next year to assess progress and
achievement in career development and college preparation programs (non-credit classes that are part of a non-credit program or that lead to credit enrollment).

Recently, I gave presentations to the Board of Trustees and to the Faculty Senate on the 2008 assessments. While the report indicated that we had made some improvement on some of the measures, when compared to our peer institutions, Cerritos College was below average on all seven measures. While I believe Cerritos College is a quality institution that serves many students well, this data suggests that we are not serving all of our students as well as our peer institutions. I know that you, like me, would like Cerritos to be at the top of our peer groupings.

In order to get there, I’ve heard many on campus say we need to do things a bit differently. Thus, we have a number of recent initiatives that you are undoubtedly aware of: iFALCON, faculty inquiry groups (FIGs), enhanced orientation programs, a summer bridge program, and numerous others.

This Thursday, at an all-faculty meeting in the Teleconference Center, Faculty Senate President Bryan Reece and Faculty Program Review Committee Chair Mark Fronke will be talking about student learning outcomes and a revised program review process, two other important ingredients in our drive to improve learning at Cerritos College. I hope you will join me to hear presentations about these important issues.

If you want to view the entire ARCC report, it is available online at


5. **My annual goals:** Because of the circumstances of my appointment as Acting President, I did not develop a formal set of goals for the year, though I did make an informal list of things I felt the college needed to accomplish in 2008-09 shortly after I became Acting President. At the February 4, 2009 Board of Trustees meeting, the Board and I formalized that list into a set of 15 goals for the year. Almost all are focused on guiding the college into a condition of organizational, fiscal, and communicative stability following a period of uncertainty. Completing most of them has been underway since I was appointed in July 2008. The Board and I thought it important to share these goals with the campus so that you can know them and understand that their completion depends on many, if not all, of you. Here they are:

1. Address the four recommendations given to the college in June 2008 by the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC):

   A. Establish effective methods of communication leading to participation of all constituencies of the campus community in an on-going collegial dialogue regarding continuous improvement of student learning and institutional processes
B. Complete the initial cycle of planning and resource allocation and evaluate the process so that each cycle is complete and the resulting data and research can be fed back to provide continuous improvement

C. Complete program review in non-instructional areas

D. Improve campus shared governance climate to provide substantial voice for faculty and middle managers and meaningful input for students and staff on issues that are appropriate for each group

2. Prepare the accreditation progress report, which is due to the Commission by March 1, 2009, and prepare the college for a follow-up visit by Commission representatives.

3. Guide the college through a difficult budget year by prudently managing resources and enrollment.

4. Plan for the possibility that the College will need to borrow from internally-controlled and external funds to deal with anticipated cash flow challenges caused by proposed state allocation schedules.

5. Improve communication and collaborative decision-making with campus constituent groups by consulting their leaders and, where appropriate (Faculty Senate, ASCC, etc.), attending their and other meetings to answer questions and address pending issues.

6. Provide the campus with regular updates on key issues and activities of concern (budget, accreditation, etc.).

7. Help prepare the college for a search for a permanent President.

8. Complete task force study of critical elements of Project Hope and develop plan for institutionalizing those elements into the operations of the College.

9. Fill vacant senior administrative positions and other key management vacancies to ensure continuity in the college’s leadership.

10. Complete feasibility study of compressed academic calendar.

11. Complete and begin implementation of the College’s Developmental Education Plan.

12. Work with K-12 and business partners to develop and realize projects of mutual interest.

13. Continue to effectively publicize the college’s presence and activities in the community.
14. Continue implementation of the College’s GO Bond funded facilities projects (infrastructure, pool, central plant, classroom office building #1, auto partners building).

15. Continue approval process for Board policies as appropriate.

6. **Upcoming Events:** We have a number of exciting events coming up. We have a groundbreaking for the Classroom/Laboratory/Office Building that will house physical sciences and some of technology at 5 p.m. on March 4, 2009.

Then, on Friday, March 27, 2009, at 11 a.m. we will break ground for the new Automotive Partners Building. We have invited Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger to join us and are hopeful that his schedule will allow him to attend.

In my next letter, I will address some of the facilities issues that have been brought to our collective attention in recent days. But this letter is already long enough and I don’t want to lose my audience, so I’ll stop for now.

Sincerely,
Bill Farmer, Acting President
Cerritos College