Dear Campus Colleagues,

Welcome back to the 2009-10 academic year! We will have an opening convocation this Thursday at 11 a.m. in Burnight Theatre to kick off the year and formally welcome each other back. I hope you can all attend. In the meantime, here’s an update on several issues.

**What Happened During the Summer**

Last summer, I wrote to you about the three major challenges Cerritos College faced for 2008-09: accreditation, budget, and the presidential search. I am pleased to say that we have addressed all three challenges. At the June meeting of the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC), we were removed from warning status. Through prudent management of our resources, we avoided any draconian budget cuts last year and appear to be in a position to avoid similar draconian measures in 2009-10 unless there are mid-year budget cuts that we are required to make. And finally, the Board has chosen a new president. So given all the external forces that are affecting us (recession, California budget mess, etc.), Cerritos College is in pretty good shape as we prepare to welcome a new president and start the year.

**Budget Update**

As you probably know by now, the legislature passed a budget that raised community college fees to $26 a unit and reduced our funding by about 8-10%. We know what our general fund budget will be for next year and will ask the Board of Trustees to approve the college’s revised budget at its September 2, 2009 meeting. However, the position of categorically-funded programs is still not clear. At the state level, some categorical programs were exempted from cuts, some were targeted for 16% budget reductions, and others were hit with 32% cuts. Those percentages were based on the state obtaining federal stimulus funds, estimated at $130 million for the state, to backfill part of those cuts. However, since the budget was adopted, the amount of federal stimulus dollars—available only for one year—has been revised downward to between $60 and $90 million for the state. If this lower estimate is more accurate, the percentages of budget cuts for non-exempt categorical programs will rise even more. Cerritos College categorical program managers have been anticipating these greater budget cuts, and we believe we are able to absorb them even though the level of service (though not the quality) to our students will inevitably decline. We should know more about the exact size of the stimulus dollars available to community colleges in the next few weeks and have a clearer idea of how our categorical programs will be affected.

**Enrollment Update**

At the same time that our funding has declined, the demand for our classes has skyrocketed. The lines to register, see a counselor, and take assessment tests have been longer than in any of my five years here. I don’t need to tell any of you this because you are seeing it daily in your offices and in your classes.
The state has reduced the number of Full-Time Equivalent Students (FTES) it will fund for all colleges this year, even though it knows we all could serve more students. Our funding level is returning to 2005-06 and 2006-07 levels, as you can see from the chart below:

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<td>Funded FTES</td>
<td>17,135.37</td>
<td>16,620.93</td>
<td>16,579.84</td>
<td>17,172.77</td>
<td>17358.88</td>
<td>16700.46</td>
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<td>16700.46</td>
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As of this morning, we have already earned 9917.49 FTES in the summer and fall sessions, leaving us only 6782.97 FTES before we reach our funded target. To give you some comparison, last year we earned about 8300 FTES in fall and about 8100 in spring. You can see that unless we reduce spring, we will earn far more FTES than we will be funded for. Therefore, we have reduced sections to bring our costs in line with our funding.

In line with the goal of not offering more classes than we will be funded for, our plan is to offer very few classes in the first six weeks of Summer 2010 and then offer a typical second six weeks of classes which will generate about 1000-1300 FTES, our typical total. This assumes that 2010-11 will be a similarly difficult budget year for community colleges, as all evidence indicates. So you should plan for a reduced spring class schedule, a severely reduced summer session schedule before July 1, 2010, and a typical summer session schedule after July 1, 2010.

**Board of Trustees Thank You**

The Board of Trustees has asked me to expressly thank all of you who have worked so hard during the beginning of this semester to make a difficult time easier for our students. They expressly asked me to thank the academic staff for managing the schedule effectively, the student services staff for serving so many students effectively despite reduced staff, and the facilities staff for the work they did preparing the college for the beginning of the new semester. Nearly all the classrooms in the Social Sciences Building have new carpeting, and soon all faculty offices in that building will have new carpeting also. The outside of the Social Sciences Building has been refurbished and cleaned. Many of the parking lots were resurfaced before the start of fall semester. And we are in the process of ordering new classroom chairs for all standard classrooms. Those chairs, purchased with bond money, should be available for the beginning of spring semester.

**Accreditation Update**

While we were removed from warning in June, we will have another follow-up visit this spring for which we must prepare a progress report which addresses the following two recommendations:

*Recommendation 3: Planning, Resource Allocation, and Evaluation*

(Because the college has not met Recommendation 2 from the 2002 Evaluation Team Report, that recommendation is repeated here with additions relevant to the college’s current deficiency with the standards cited.)

To meet the standards, the team recommends that the college make full use of the Office of Research and Planning to complete the development of a comprehensive planning and evaluation process that is guided by the college mission statement and integrates strategic,
master, and operational planning; unit planning based on appropriate program review; and the allocation of institutional resources. Both the planning process and a delineation of responsibilities for the implementation of the process should be communicated clearly to the entire campus community. (IA.3, IB.4)(IVB.2.b)

The team further recommends that

- the college state its objectives in measurable terms in all its planning documents including the strategic plan and the unit plans (IB.2), and
- the college integrate planning for human resources, facilities, technology, and finances into the college plan and use the results of this evaluation to improve human resource processes, facilities utilization, the effective use of technology, and the distribution of financial resources. (IIIA.6)(IIIB.2.b)(IIIC.2)(IIID.1.a)

The Commission also requires Cerritos College to demonstrate that activities essential to the resolution of Recommendation 8 (below) have been sustained.

Recommendation 8: Leadership: Empowerment, Innovation, Collaboration, and Decision-Making

In order to meet the standards, the team recommends that the college, through the leadership of the president, establish a climate of empowerment, innovation and collaboration resulting in a decision-making process that provides for a substantial voice for faculty and middle managers and meaningful input for students and staff in areas that reflect their responsibility. The team further recommends that processes for decision-making be regularly evaluated to assure their integrity and effectiveness. (IVA.1)(IVA.2.a) (IVA.5)(IVB.2.a)(IVB.2.b)

New President

The new president and the board have been in contract negotiations which I am told have now been concluded successfully. The Board, at its September 2, 2009, meeting, will be asked to formally approve the negotiated contract so that Dr. Linda Lacy can begin her tenure as Cerritos College’s president. I anticipate that her start date will be sometime in mid-September. I’ll keep you posted as soon as that date is finalized.

I hope you have a wonderful semester!

Sincerely,
Bill Farmer, Acting President
Cerritos College