

Citrus College Celebrates its Centennial: 100 Years of Educational Excellence

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The year was 1915. A gallon of gas cost 15 cents, and you could use it to fill the tank of your new car purchased from the pages of the Sears catalog. At Harvard University, tuition was \$160 annually, and the cost of the most expensive mathematics textbook available was \$2.50.

At a time in America when only 13.5 percent of people over the age of 25 had a high school diploma, a new idea in higher education was sweeping the nation—the junior college. In the early 1900s, three-quarters of high school graduates were choosing not to further their education due to financial, logistical or social reasons. National leaders were beginning to realize that a more highly-skilled workforce was vital to the country's economic strength. Extolling the ideals of democracy and education for all, advocates of the junior college movement proposed providing the first two years of a college education—tuition free—to high school graduates at schools they were already attending.

On the evening of June 5, 1915, the forward-looking board of education of Citrus Union High School voted to establish Citrus Junior College, making Citrus College the oldest community college in Los Angeles County and the fifth oldest in the state.

Who could have imagined 100 years ago that Citrus Junior College, with its first class of 27 students and no more than seven courses to choose from, would evolve into a nationally acclaimed community college with more than 18,000 students, awarding degrees and certificates in 94 academic and career technical program areas?

Today, Citrus College is a recognized leader among community colleges in the nation, the state and the region. This year alone, the publication *Hispanic Outlook in Higher Education* ranked Citrus College as one of the Top 25 community colleges in the

country for degree completion by Hispanic students. Citrus College has been recognized by PayScale, Inc. as one of the nation's top 10 public two-year colleges based on alumni earning potential, and *GI Jobs* magazine named Citrus College a Military Friendly School® for the fifth consecutive year.

In the state, Citrus College has received commendation as a leader in developing and awarding Associate Degrees for Transfer, or ADTs, which allow students to transfer to the California State University system with junior standing. In fact, since the first class of students eligible to earn an ADT from Citrus College graduated in 2012, the number of ADTs awarded at commencement has grown from 39 to 549. Currently, Citrus College offers 16 ADTs, and the college ranks number one among California's community colleges for awarding ADTs in science.

Locally, for the second consecutive year, Citrus College was honored to be named "Best Community College" in the San Gabriel Valley in a reader's choice poll by the San Gabriel Valley Newsgroup publications.

In 2012, Citrus College students, faculty, staff and institutional leaders signed a pledge to make Citrus College a College of Completion. Since that time, the college has set new records for the numbers of degrees and certificates awarded at commencement each year. On June 13, 2015, we expect to break another college record by awarding more than 2,500 degrees and certificates, up from 2,119 last year.

All of these amazing achievements—and many others—can be credited with the fact that Citrus College was recently named the fifth fastest-growing community college in the United States among its peer institutions by *Community College Week* magazine.

Although much has changed since the college was founded in 1915, there are several fundamental tenets that have guided the institution throughout the decades. Those include an emphasis on transfer; outstanding faculty and staff that are committed to

student success; board members and administrators with a vision for the future; and strong reciprocal partnerships with the communities we serve.

On the occasion of our 100th anniversary and on behalf of the entire Citrus College Community, it is my honor to thank all those with whom Citrus College has partnered throughout the years—our K-12 school districts, our alumni and donors, community and business leaders, and the members of the communities we serve. We couldn't have done it without you!

Today, it is evident that Citrus College stands at the threshold of a future filled with exciting possibilities. We look forward to continuing our ongoing pursuit of educational excellence, as we begin our next 100 years.