

Citrus VIEW

— LATEST NEWS FROM CITRUS COLLEGE —

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Veterans Success Center puts students' needs first

Located near the Educational Development Center, the VSC is open five days a week. Pictured (L-R): Junior Diaz, work-study student; Herm Balingit, work-study student; Maria Buffo, VSC director; Jorge Ruiz, work-study student; and Rita Barber, veterans services technician

Led by an incredible team of dedicated individuals, the Citrus College Veterans Success Center (VSC) is home to many important resources aimed at helping student-veterans succeed in and out of the classroom.

After a student-veteran enrolls at Citrus College, they receive onboarding support that includes academic counseling and assistance with Veterans Affairs (VA) benefits and financial aid, among other services.

"The VSC is committed to supporting all student-veterans and military-connected students," said Maria Buffo, VSC director.

Currently, the VSC has two full-time staff members, a part-time mental health professional, a part-time VA representative and eight work-study students. Full-time counseling services are also available.

To help student-veterans excel, the VSC offers rental access to smart pens, textbooks and calculators. In addition, the center provides free parking and printing services.

Inside the center, the study area is equipped with eight computers, headphone sets and a camera. Students taking a break between classes can also use the lounge, which has a TV, massage chair and a large monitor for presentations.

Another popular feature inside the VSC is its kitchen. Fully stocked with snacks and drinks, the kitchen also boasts a coffee bar, filtered water dispenser and microwave.

This semester, the VSC has begun working with other community colleges to give students an opportunity to tour University of California and California State University campuses, as well as private colleges and universities.

The tours have gone well so far, Buffo said. On average, six Citrus College student-veterans have attended each of the tours.

For veterans who are undecided on attending college, Buffo highlighted how Citrus College and the VSC can help them reach their academic goals while providing individual support.

"As a veteran myself, I understand the challenges of transitioning from military to civilian life," Buffo said. "I openly share my own experiences to show how discussing these challenges can bring relief."

"I want prospective students to know that our support extends beyond academics, addressing their personal needs as well," she added. "The VSC will always be here to help and guide any veteran who seeks our support."

Campus shows off school spirit at Homecoming



The Citrus College Fighting Owls and Cerritos College Falcons stand at midfield during the pregame coin toss.

For the second year in a row, dozens of Citrus College campus community members gathered at the Citrus Stadium for an annual Homecoming celebration.

This year, the festivities began on Oct. 26 with pregame activities, including live music by student musicians, face painting, Halloween pumpkin decorations, games and more. Several student clubs, honors societies and departments were represented as well.

Following the celebration, attendees stayed for the Fighting Owls football game against Cerritos College.

For more information about the Citrus Alumni & Friends Association and future activities planned for the campus community, visit www.citruscollege.edu/foundation/alumni.



Citrus College observes Hispanic/Latinx Heritage Month with celebrations, activities



An author spotlight, panel discussion and piñata-making activity were among those events featured during Hispanic/Latinx Heritage Month.

From Sept. 15 through Oct. 15, Citrus College continued its tradition of honoring Hispanic/Latinx Heritage Month (HLHM) by hosting several activities and educational opportunities.

The celebration began with a Lotería (Mexican bingo) tournament in September and continued with a panel discussion, author spotlight and piñata-making activity in October. Additionally, the library showcased an in-person HLHM book display and online resource guide, which contained links to books, quotes, films and other important HLHM-themed content.

The panel discussion on Oct. 2 featured perspectives from six campus community members, including Tommy Reyes, architecture instructor; Cristina Gómez, Psy.D., adjunct psychology instructor; Rosario García, student life supervisor; Lilianna Verduzco, counseling services coordinator; Mia Robles, student; and Bianca Rodriguez, student. During the event, participants shared their experiences growing up, overcoming adversity, navigating identity and finding their voice.

The author spotlight organized by the Hayden Memorial Library was another highlight. Held on Oct. 9, it featured alumna Arlene Abundis, who recently published the acclaimed children's book, "Into the Mighty Sea." In front of an audience of faculty, staff and students, Abundis shared the tale of her main character Mariel, a young Cuban American who draws and paints to calm her big feelings. Abundis also shared her journey as a student, mother and author.

The festivities concluded with a fun-filled piñata-making activity on Oct. 14.



Symposium shines spotlight on student research

From lung cancer detection to hybrid renewable energy systems, the 13 students who recently shared their work at the annual Citrus College STEM Research Symposium are searching for solutions to modern challenges.

Hosted in the Campus Center on Sept. 25, the symposium showcased the research conducted by Citrus College STEM students as part of the college's Summer Research Experience (SRE).

Participants displayed posters from projects spanning a variety of fields, including computer technology, physics and environmental science.

"Our wonderful students spent last summer at sites like Azusa Pacific University, the University of Southern California, the California Botanic Garden, Chapman University, Cal Poly Pomona and Cal State Fullerton doing research with faculty members and four-year college students," said Bala Sethu Raja, dean of mathematics, sciences and business. "They presented their findings at their research sites first,



Sidney Esparza, a Citrus College STEM major, explains the research she conducted as part of this year's SRE.

and then brought their projects back here to present to our community."

Over 130 faculty, staff and students attended this year's symposium. They had the opportunity to review the research posters and discuss the projects with the students who completed them.

"The symposium is a great event because it offers SRE participants a platform to present their research, while also emphasizing the efforts of our STEM program, the dedication of our students and the quality of the research being conducted," explained Monica Hernandez, grants project specialist and event coordinator. "The overwhelming support from the Citrus College community and beyond contributed significantly to the event's success."

According to Hernandez, the symposium serves multiple purposes. In addition to celebrating the students' achievements, it also empowers them and shows them that they belong in STEM fields.

"Over the past eight years, I've seen firsthand how participating in the SRE has transformed students. It builds their self-assurance, leads to further research opportunities, and even secures paid internships and jobs," she said. "It's incredibly rewarding to witness their growth."

Study abroad program connects students to life-changing experiences



A previous study abroad experience in Prague, Czech Republic, in the summer of 2024.

From visiting the vibrant streets of Barcelona to the lush rainforests of Costa Rica, the Citrus College Study Abroad program has helped hundreds of students in the past year achieve their dream of studying internationally.

Coordinated on campus by John Morris, study abroad specialist, the program engages interested students and guides them through the application process. To help lessen the cost, the program also connects students to financial aid and scholarship resources.

During the study abroad programs, students earn college credits while taking classes from instructors, many of whom are full-time faculty members at Citrus College.

For example, forestry faculty member Robert Goodman led students on an experience to Costa Rica earlier this year, where they studied plants and animals as part of BIOL 145 Environmental Science.

"This program was unique as they traveled to various biological centers instead of being based in one city," Morris said.



Citrus College students experience a study abroad trip to Costa Rica in the winter of 2024.

In addition, Citrus College faculty members Denise Kaisler, Ph.D. (astronomy), and Gailynn White, Ph.D. (sociology), taught courses over the summer in Prague, Czech Republic. While in the historic city, students learned how to read the world's oldest astronomical clock with Dr. Kaisler.

Looking ahead, students will travel to Paris and Seville, Spain, in the winter and spring, respectively. Though not approved yet, the program is hoping to add Osaka, Japan, and Florence, Italy, as the next destinations.

The benefits to studying abroad are numerous, according to Morris. In addition to learning about different cultures, students often experience personal growth.

"Students gain independence and self-confidence by navigating new environments and overcoming various challenges," Morris said. "Most importantly, students make lifelong friends and share the adventure of a lifetime together."

To learn more about study abroad, visit www.citruscollege.edu/studyabroad.

Theatre arts program brings cult classic to Citrus stage



Citrus College students performing a stage adaptation of the Stephen King novel, "Carrie."

Nothing says Halloween quite like pigs' blood, telekinetic powers and prom-queen vengeance.

From Oct. 24-27, students and staff from the Citrus College Theatre Arts program presented four performances of "Carrie: The Musical" on stage at the Haugh Performing Arts Center.

Directed by faculty member Renee Liskey with vocal direction from faculty member Marius Beltran, the contemporary rock opera is a stage adaptation of Stephen King's bestselling novel, "Carrie."

"'Carrie' was chosen, for one, because it is close to Halloween and the subject fit well with the season. It is also a favorite of the students," Liskey explained. "We performed one number from 'Carrie' in our 2023 Halloween Spooktacular and it was a hit, so we decided to further investigate putting together a full production of the show."

According to Liskey, the production featured dozens of students, including 19 actors, 12 crew members and six musicians.

Although the team began rehearsing at the beginning of September, preparations for the show began much earlier.

"Prior to casting, there were several meetings [during which time] we fleshed out how we all see the production and what we will each bring to the table to create a concise, educational and profitable production," Liskey said.

The result was a production that appealed to a wide range of audiences, including musical theater fans, Stephen King enthusiasts and horror movie aficionados.

"The college's performing arts programs take pride in producing well-rounded, highly trained students who can go out and work in professional fields," Liskey said. "Part of that training is for students to immerse themselves in full-scale productions on a regular basis, so that when they go out into the professional performance world, they have the tools already practiced and in their wheelhouse."

'Magic of Citrus' anniversary gala to raise money for scholarships



Citrus College will celebrate its 110th anniversary in 2025.

To celebrate 110 years of serving students in the San Gabriel Valley, Citrus College and the Citrus College Foundation are hosting an anniversary gala that will feature musical performances by student musicians, live and silent auctions, and appearances from two outstanding magicians – Dr. Dale Salwak and Jeffrey Thompson.

With the theme of "Celebrating the Magic of Citrus," the gala will be held at the Haugh Performing Arts Center on Saturday, March 22. Funds raised from the event will support student scholars, as well as the college's programs and services.

The all-star event will begin with a cocktail reception at 6 p.m., followed by dinner at 7 p.m. Throughout the evening, guests will be treated to award-winning entertainment as well as student

success stories. Dr. Salwak, one of the two featured magicians, has been a full-time English faculty member at Citrus College since 1973. His captivating performances have taken him across several continents.



The college previously celebrated its 50th anniversary in 1965 with a proclamation from Los Angeles County, and its 75th anniversary in 1990 with a balloon launch.

He has also been featured at the Magic Castle in Hollywood since 1972, where he has been nominated four times as Stage Magician of the Year.

Individuals and groups looking to attend or sponsor the event can choose from a variety of packages, the details of which can be found at www.citruscollege.edu/anniversarygala (more info coming soon!).

"We are looking forward to celebrating our 110th anniversary of service to our community," said Dr. Greg Schulz, superintendent/president of Citrus College. "This celebration will give us the opportunity to have fun and showcase what sets us apart."

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