

# Teachers vital in fighting financial aid fraud

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Citrus has disenrolled over 380 fraudulent students this semester and has reached out to the chancellors' office to help investigate and resolve the problem. Joumana McGowan, vice president of academic affairs, said

at a faculty senate meeting on April 28 the college has found over 380 fraudulent students and is working with other community colleges and sharing the components of what is happening at their schools to stop fraudulent activity.

Richard Rams, vice president of student services, said in an email interview since this is an active investigation, the college is not prepared to report on a specific number of purges conducted to disenroll fraudulent student

accounts.

The patterns that have been found to help identify those "phantom students" are:

- A group of students who enroll in the same five CRNs with the same class time same teacher
- Several students with the same name but with multiple variations.
- Students using international I.P. addresses

Instructors have been at the forefront of combating the fraudulent activities by dropping

non-participants/non-attendees from courses.

"On the student services side, selecting students suspected of fraud for financial aid verification as authorized under federal law also is a proven strategy," Rams said. "Phantom students do not respond to verification requests since they don't have the appropriate credentials to meet verification requirements."

Eight-week courses have also experienced mass amounts of

fraudulent student enrollments.

"I do have one of the late start classes and it was one of the classes that was hit really hard, it enrolled at 90 and I had to drop before census 40 students," Catie Bensacon, art history and appreciation professor, said at the faculty senate meeting April 28.

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## Modern ED site plans move forward

*\$14 million bid brings the 10-year project closer to construction*

BY JUSTIN GEORGE  
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A bid for the amount of \$14,091,700 from Horizons Construction Company International was approved at the May 4 Board of Trustees meeting.

After over 10 years of planning, Educational Development Center Building modernization construction could begin soon at Citrus College.

A Board of Trustees meeting report by Claudette Dain said a job walk took place on March 2 with 14 contractors as well as Facilities and Purchasing in attendance

If a successful bid is received, construction will begin in April, the report said.

Director of Facilities and Construction Fred Diamond said in an email that "the ED building will be the last building modernization done under Measure G."

Measure G is a \$121 million bond measure passed in 2004. The funds were used to modernize existing campus facilities and build new ones.

Planning for the ED Building modernization project began over 10 years ago, Diamond said.

"The ED modernization process includes the design phase, the approval phase, the bidding phase and the construction phase," Diamond said. "All of these

# ASCC ELECTION RESULTS IN: LOW VOTER TURNOUT

BY JUSTIN GEORGE  
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The Citrus College student government for 2021-2022 has been elected without a president or vice president.

The election ended April 22 and results were posted April 26 on the Citrus College Student Affairs website.

All five students who ran for positions on the Associated Students of Citrus College Executive Board were elected, Student Life Supervisor Rosario Garcia said in an email. A total of 44 votes were received.

However, Article VIII, Section 3 of ASCC's constitution says that candidates must receive at least 50 votes to be elected.

Outgoing ASCC President Jennifer Munguia said in an email that some exceptions had to be made to accommodate the low number of votes received, and that "as long as they get some votes in they should be able to be on the board."

There are no returning officers for the 2021-2022 term.

A president has not yet been elected. Munguia said she thinks the small turnout is due to low sign-ups.

"I believe we are going to hold a special election later on in the semester to see if anyone wants to run for president," Munguia said in an email.

Student Life Supervisor Rosario Garcia was

### ASCC NEW OFFICERS:

**LEGISLATIVE LIAISON**  
 Arvin Shahid

**SENATORS**  
 Daniel Caldera  
 Hala Fakhoury  
 Jessie San

**STUDENT TRUSTEE**  
 Taylor E. McNeal

emailed on May 5 about exceptions made for this election and plans for a special election but has not responded for comment.

The 2020-2021 executive board voted to delete Article IV, Section 3, Item G from ASCC's constitution. It said that to be elected president or vice president, a student must have been part of the executive board for at least one semester.

Dean of Students Maryann Tolano-Leveque did not immediately respond to an email request for an interview regarding the process.

The Clarion will update this story as when we receive further information.

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# New faculty contract pends approval

BY LUCY ARGAEZ  
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The Citrus Community College district has reached an agreement with the faculty after two day-long bargaining sessions with the appointed mediator.

Dave Brown, Citrus College Faculty Association bargaining chair and automotive instructor, said in a phone interview on April 27 that the negotiations should be settled within the next week or two.

Brown said both the district and faculty have signed a tentative agreement awaiting approval at the next board of trustees meeting on May 4. The faculty unit will also need to approve the settlement via electronic voting ballots, which are due by 3 p.m. May 7.

The Public Employment Relations Board, an agency in charge of administering the bargaining regulations for employees of California's public schools, colleges and universities,

agreed that the negotiations were at an impasse on March 26. The bargaining sessions were on April 12 and 20.

"We were able to reach an agreement," Brown said in an April 26 email to colleagues. "It is likely not the agreement many folks might have been hoping for, but it does preserve all of the good parts of the District's Last, Best, and Final offer from back in November."

The email state the enhancements made to the contract are a 2% off-schedule bonus payment, which will be paid back from Jan. 1, 2021, to the end of the contract date on Dec. 31, 2023. All full-time faculty will receive a one-time payment of \$2,200 each year of the agreement. There will also be a \$2,500 increase to the existing retirement incentive of \$5,000 for those who retire during the agreement term.

Brown said additional changes to the contract include:

- improved working conditions



PHOTO COURTESY OF UNSPLASH

for the librarians, the college nurse and counselors

- A clearer description on how dues will be collected

■ A clearer description on how faculty benefits are provided  
"This mediated settlement represents movement on the part

of both the District's team and our team," Brown said. "As such, I'd like to thank the District for engaging in this process in good faith."

## Sixth case reported in April

### Campus Safety officer tests positive for COVID-19 during campus closure

BY JUSTIN GEORGE  
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At least one Campus Safety officer at Citrus College has tested positive for COVID-19, a memo from Director of Human Resources Robert Sammis said on

April 15. This is the 6th reported case on campus.

The memo said those who may have been in contact with the officer have been notified and the exposed areas have been disinfected. The infected officer was not identified in the memo.

"Please know that Citrus

College is committed to the health and well-being of our students, faculty, staff and broader college community."

Anyone who has been in contact with a Campus Safety officer who has not been contacted should email Sammis at rsammis@citruscollege.edu.



CLARION ARCHIVES

## ASCC committee struggles to spend its activities budget

BY VIDAL ESPINA  
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Spending money is not a problem for most college students. But for the Campus Activities Board, the ASCC committee responsible for planning student social activities, spending money has been hard this semester.

"We are trying to figure out ways to spend the money because we can't reuse the money next year," Luna Busch, treasurer for ASCC, said during a Zoom interview discussing the ASCC budget for social activities.

Busch said that all current budgets for ASCC were approved in the prior school year, meaning this year's budget of \$5,757 for social activities was approved last year.

The social activities budget is part of the ASCC general budget that is mostly funded by the student services fee, a fee due when registering for fall or spring courses.

During a regular on-campus school year, spending an amount like this would not be an issue for the committee.

Busch said that the budget would cover the costs of events on campus, which might include



PHOTO BY AKSON COURTESY OF UNSPLASH

food and prizes for attendees and guests to speak at these events.

However, this year's distance learning format has been a challenge for the Campus Activities Board.

"Normally we usually spend the total amount we are given, but it's just been hard because we keep trying to figure out what to use it on," Busch said, laughing in frustration at the situation. "It's just been hard."

The urgency to spend the budget lies on the basis that any

budget amount that is left over at the end of the school year does not get rolled over into the next year's spending budget.

Busch said that any money that is not used goes into reserves and any money in the reserves cannot be touched unless there is a vote to access the money.

"So pretty much we're just trying to use it while we can before it goes into our reserves," Busch said.

So far, the committee is using the money for gift cards they give

away during online social events.

This semester, there have been two social events: the Friendship Event that occurred on March 11 and, the most recent event, Major Meet and Greet that occurred on April 22.

The Friendship Event was created as a response to students who expressed their want of friendship and connectivity during this time of distance learning.

Busch said that Dana Hester, dean of social and behavioral

sciences, with whom Busch works with, had asked that a friendship event be created after noticing that students were struggling to make friends.

Leah Hartwell, the ASCC commissioner of activities, said in a Zoom interview that she is also aware of the interest of students wanting to make friends.

"Yes, we've definitely had students bring that up in our meetings before saying, you know, 'I've noticed that I'm not alone in wanting to find friends at Citrus,'" Hartwell said.

When planning the first Friendship Event, Hartwell didn't know how many attendees to expect but was pleasantly surprised at the amount who showed up.

She also said that the second Friendship Event was planned at the request of those students who had attended the first event.

The second Friendship Event is scheduled at 2:30 - 4 p.m. on Thursday. Check the CitrusMobile app or follow the Citrus Student Life account on Instagram, @citrusstudentlife, for more information on this event.





PHOTO COURTESY OF BERMIX STUDIO ON UNSPLASH

# Phishing scams appear in students' inboxes

*Information Services shares their efforts in combatting scams and fraudulent content*

BY CESAR ACUNA  
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Citrus College students have encountered phishing scams in their campus email inboxes as they continue to work remotely.

Phishing is the imitation of a reputable company or organization to extract valuable information such as email addresses, phone numbers and passwords, said phishing.org. These emails or links are entirely fraudulent and exist for the sole purpose of luring people into giving up information.

Phishing scams appear to be legitimate requests for personal information, usually coming from the email addresses of staff or other students.

Chief Information Services Officer Bob Hughes confirmed in

an email interview that the school is experiencing an increase in scam emails from inside and outside the Citrus College network.

"We have recently increased our efforts to combat scam and phishing e-mails by limiting the functionality of new accounts, limiting the number of e-mails that an individual student account can send, deleting spam e-mail from accounts, and proactively disabling accounts that send spam," Hughes said.

These fraudulent email accounts come from fake student accounts and accounts from former students that are no longer in use, Hughes said.

"It was obviously a phish scam because the email address that it was from was a (Citrus) student email," Citrus student Caleb Anderson said in a text interview. "An email asking

for such information should be from some sort of administration IT."

Anderson was not the only student to receive this particular email.

"It doesn't make sense for the school to send out this email," Citrus student Anthony Fonseca said in a phone interview. "I don't think it is necessary for people to have to verify our emails in this way. I would never give out my password unless I was sure it was the college."

Small inconsistencies, such as the fact that this email came from a student account, can help one identify the legitimacy of these emails.

Hughes suggested students and staff work together to combat phishing by not responding, deleting and flagging spam emails as "junk" in their Office 365 account.

## Theatre arts program offers in-person class

*Musical Theatre Intensive is allowing students to train on campus this summer*

BY ISHIKA MUCHHAL  
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A six-week, in-person musical theatre intensive will take place this summer semester from July 6 to August 5.

The course will be 1-5:30 p.m. Monday through Thursday. Students will receive training in acting, dancing and singing in the summer program.

Students will be able to return to campus while following COVID-19 protocols as safety remains a top priority for the college. Dean of Visual and Performing Arts John Vaughan said the specific guidelines for returning to campus are still a work in progress.

"We have to wait to make sure we are following all of the guidelines that Los Angeles County Health gives us as well as the plans that are submitted to the coronavirus taskforce here on campus," Vaughan said.

Most of the performing arts summer classes will be outside and start two weeks later to allow more time to adjust to anticipated county guidelines.

"Everyone feels safe that way," Vaughan said. "Science tells us that being outside, especially if you're outside and using masks, is a much safer environment."

Faculty hopes this setting will allow more freedom to slowly resume performing arts training,

even though it may not be the same as previous years.

Every summer, Citrus produces a summer musical open to all Citrus students. However due to the uncertainty and restrictions of the pandemic, this summer intensive will focus on training and technique for high school seniors and college students rather than a performance.

The program's flyer says additional topics of focus will include audition skills, song selection, cold readings, performance techniques and industry guest lecturers.

Dance Professor Renee Liskey and Music Professor Doug Austin will be teaching this intensive.

Liskey said the two main goals for the summer intensive are to get students together in a creative space and back to training.

"A lot of students have been stuck in bathrooms, garages and small bedrooms— places that aren't conducive to really working their craft," Liskey said. "We'll do a lot of ballet barre work, conditioning, working on their lines, working on correct placement of their bodies and getting that technique back into their bodies."

The transition to online art education has been demanding on both students and teachers, with the pandemic impacting both training and mental health. Liskey said her classes had to adapt to the lack of instant

GRAPHIC COURTESY OF DOUG AUSTIN

This flyer has been used across social media to promote the summer course.

feedback that is usually the norm in dance classes.

"I want to reintroduce them to that level of training and get them back on the path that they were on prior to going on lockdown a year ago," she said.

Liskey focused on slowing down, checking in, condensing technique and making sure students were not getting injured in their small spaces.

"I had to give them some time to be validated and experience their feelings," Liskey said. "They kind of did the same for me, in terms of allowing me to give different options, allowing me to go a little slower, allowing me to feel my emotions about the situation."

After an uncertain year,

performing arts teachers look forward to students reconnecting with their peers, campus, teachers and art practices.

Liskey said the Visual and Performing Arts program has put together a protocol that includes spacing, mask use, checking in names when on campus, QR codes for buildings and bathrooms and other methods to help with contact tracing.

For the summer courses, the hope is more freedom to be back in-person and indoors.

"I might possibly have this musical theatre class in the campus centre," Liskey said. "That space in the campus centre is really large. Students would be masked, but we would be able

to spread out to the appropriate distance away from each other and still be inside where it's cool."

As L.A. County enters the less restrictive yellow tier for COVID-19, faculty is optimistic about the slow transition back into in-person classes.

Students can register for the summer session on Wingspan starting May 10. The CRNs are 42266 and 42267.

For more information on the program, students can email Doug Austin at [daustin@citruscollege.edu](mailto:daustin@citruscollege.edu) or refer to the flyer on the Citrus Visual and Performing Arts Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/793015260844357/posts/2441425802669953/>.



Opinion

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IMAGE FROM CLARION ARCHIVES

# Virtual commencement: the better ceremony

BY BRANDON JATICO  
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While it may have been possible to pull off an in-person ceremony with the new regulations and guidelines, it still wouldn't be the same and would put many families at unnecessary risk. The decision to make the ceremony virtual could not have been an easy one, but it's the right and only call.

Citrus Superintendent and President Dr. Geraldine M. Perri said in an email that the class of 2021 will celebrate its graduation with a digital commencement

ceremony.

Superintendent/President Perri explained in the email that the ceremony will be on YouTube, although it is unknown if it will be a livestream event or a photo slideshow like the 2020 commencement ceremony. While the actual ceremony will be virtual, an in-person drive up photo opportunity will be available on campus for those who want to take graduation photos.

In the midst of a deadly virus that spreads with ease, to put so many at risk by having an in-person ceremony would be reckless. There is no doubt that safety of the faculty, the

graduating class and their friends and family is more important.

The ceremony is not worth risking anyone's health. Whether the event is in-person or virtual, the students have still completed their journey; they've still gained an education, gained valuable experience and will be leaving with their degrees or certificates.

College is a tough journey that requires students to have determination, discipline and drive. The commencement ceremony is meant to celebrate all the hard work that both the students and their peers have pushed through. It's a celebration of the end of a chapter in their

lives.

Without the connection with your peers, a collective cheer and celebration, it's just a special day at home by yourself. The virtual ceremony doesn't have the human connection that an in-person ceremony has, but that's OK.

What's important is that after this ceremony, the graduating class gets to move forward with all their education and experience. The ceremony celebrates the beginning of their next steps. Implementing a virtual ceremony ensures they can take them.

phases require several months at a minimum in process time."

Citrus College's Educational and Facilities Master Plan contains written assessments of the current facilities at Citrus College. Outdated utilities and infrastructure are a general concern for most of the buildings. Diamond said the ED Building will be thoroughly gutted and refurbished.

"The ED building will basically be stripped down to its structural elements and will then be fitted with all new equipment and finishes," Diamond said. "It will look like a brand new building with all the latest and most efficient items."

Diamond said the ED Building has been used as a "swing space" over the years while other buildings, such as the Campus Center and Art Center, were being built or renovated. The Educational and Facilities Master plan said that the ED Building "housed most English courses in eight classrooms" but while being renovated, those classes were moved to a "swing space which is not conducive for English pedagogy."

The Educational and Facilities Master Plan also said that the ED Building will house two new labs, which will be used primarily for chemistry courses.

As of now, it is unclear exactly when construction will start.

"The bids have not been received and evaluated yet so we don't yet know who the contractor will be," Diamond said. However when construction starts, it should take 18 to 24 months.

## CITRUS COLLEGE CLARION

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## FRAUD from Page 1

Instructors should now flag students suspected of fraudulent activity to go through the verification process with student services. McGowan said now that the eight-week courses have begun there will be continued vigilance on non-participant students.

"When it comes to fraud, it's really everybody's responsibility, and as an institution that receives Title IV funds, we want to be responsible to the community, to the taxpayers, to the students, to everyone involved," Stephen Fahey, director of financial aid, said in a phone interview.

Fahey said when a student

applies for FAFSA, their information goes through the federal central processing system, which he said runs data through Social Security, Homeland Security and other agencies. He said for a phantom student to access federal aid, they have to have somebody's information.

"These are real people, meaning

the identities were stolen, but these are actual social security numbers," Fahey said.

Fahey said in most cases, the school detects fraud early and could recover financial aid money before it gets into pockets, but when it is withdrawn from BankMobile, it's usually gone for good.

## MAY WORKSHOPS

monday	tuesday	wednesday	thursday
10	11	12 2 P STAYING ORGANIZED UNDER PRESSURE	13 2:30 P CANVAS WORKSHOP FOR STUDENTS
17 1:20 P UNDOCU-ALLY TRAINING SESSION 1 PART 1	18 3 P UNDERSTANDING ANXIETY & DEPRESSION	19 1:20 P UNDOCU-ALLY TRAINING SESSION 1 PART 2	20
24	25 12 P SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED INFECTIONS WORKSHOP SETTING YOUR GOALS & GETTING STARTED 3 P	26 2 P RECOGNIZING HEALTHY VS. UNHEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS	27
31	01	02	03