



NEWS FROM CITY COLLEGE

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SAN DIEGO CITY COLLEGE GRADUATES MORE THAN 900 STUDENTS

San Diego (May 21, 2009) — San Diego City College will hold its 95th commencement exercises at the outdoor Organ Pavilion in Balboa Park on Friday, May 22 at 6:00 p.m.. City College is awarding 1,168 associate degrees and certificates to more than 900 students, with nearly 200 students earning two or more degrees and certificates. Fifty-eight graduates have earned a perfect 4.0 grade point average and 300 students will graduate with honors.

Of the nearly 350 graduates participating in the evening commencement, students range in age from 18 to 68. Family members graduating together at City College, include mother-daughter duo, Laronika Owens and Casedra Owens. Casedra, first in her family to graduate, is earning two associate degrees and plans to transfer to SDSU; and her mother, Laronika will receive a certificate of achievement. Additionally, sisters Janely Valdivia and Lilia Escalante are first in their family to graduate and both are earning two Associate degrees.

The most popular degrees are Liberal Arts & Sciences, Behavioral Sciences, Engineering & Technologies, and Child Development. Graduates have been accepted to a variety of four-year universities, including UC Berkeley, UCSD, Columbia University, UC Irvine and the University of Houston.

City College graduates are from 11 different states, including Arizona, Connecticut, Florida, Georgia, Indiana, Michigan, Nebraska, Nevada, Oklahoma, Texas, Virginia, Wisconsin, and 17 different countries; Mexico, Somalia, Morocco, Ivory Coast, Sudan, Philippines, Guyana South America, Germany, Armenia, Bangladesh, Republic of Panama, Puerto, Japan, Sweden, Brazil and the United Kingdom.

Selected by students to receive the Golden Apple Award for Teacher of the Year, Julie Tunnell, Professor of Accounting is the faculty speaker. In her 14th year of teaching at City College, this is the third time students have awarded Julie this honor. Professor Tunnell has developed her unique approach to teaching so students can learn in the style that is best for them. Tunnell is also a five-time recipient of Alpha Gamma Sigma's Certificate of Acknowledgement for superior contributions towards student academic achievement.

Terry Burgess, San Diego City College President said, "City College has been rated among the top ten faculties in the nation by ratemyprofessors.com. Professor Tunnell is a shining example of this honor. Our students expect and receive only the best."

Liya Vanya, the Chancellor's Scholarship Recipient is the student speaker. She will graduate with 3 associate degrees; Spanish, Business Administration and Transfer Studies. Liya moved from Armenia to the United States in 2005. With limited English skills, Liya started at City College in 2007. She will graduate with a 4.0 grade point average, a member of the Phi Theta Kappa International Honor Society, and as an active member in the Spanish Club and the TRIO Program. Liya speaks four languages, Armenian, Russian, English and Spanish, and has an interest in learning Arabic. Liya will attend USC's Leventhal School of Accounting and Marshall School of Business in Los Angeles with her sights set on becoming a financial consultant or accountant.

City College graduates are all proud of their achievements. A few special circumstances are noted below:

- While grieving the loss of her young son during her first semester in college, one student turned her college experience into a healing time. She became a Phi Theta Kappa Honor student and made the Dean's Honor's list twice. She is first in her family to graduate.
- Starting school while living in a homeless shelter with a 1-year-old child, this young woman "didn't know if I could do it", but she is graduating with honors and a 4.0 GPA.
- A single parent in her early 50s and battling stage 3 breast cancer, she has taken classes on and off at City College for nearly 2 decades. "If you persevere and just hold steadfast you can reach your goals - - although they are not without challenges".
- In 2007 while in the U.S. Navy, he was med-evacuated from Iraq and underwent 2 surgeries. Now, age 30, he is first in his family to graduate and will transfer to SDSU to pursue a nursing degree.
- One young-at-heart student in her 60s, returned to school after 44 years.

Located downtown in the East Village, San Diego City College offers 200 degrees and certificates and 1,500 day, evening, weekend and online courses to 17,000 students each semester. www.sdcity.edu

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