

PRESS RELEASE

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West Los Angeles College Will Award The Most Bachelor's Degrees in California During 50th Commencement TUESDAY - JUNE 5, 2018



West Los Angeles College's 50th Commencement Ceremony on June 5, 2018 not only marks the official start of a 12-month celebration of the College's golden anniversary, but it will be a historical first. This year is the first time that West confers Bachelor's degrees and the college will award 29 such degrees, the most by any community college in California, according to the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office.

Speakers helping to mark this momentous day will include State Senator Holly Mitchell; Assemblymember Sydney Kamlager-Dove;

Los Angeles Community College District (LACCD) Chancellor Dr. Francisco C. Rodriguez and LACCD Board Member Dr. Gabriel Buelna. The Commencement Ceremony will be held on the college Graduation Lawn, 9000 Overland Ave., Culver City, beginning at **5:00 p.m.**, Tuesday, June 5.

West is one of just 15 California community colleges that were authorized by the State Chancellor's Office in 2014 to offer a Bachelor's degree program. West's new degree in Dental Hygiene was launched in 2016 and is an expansion of the college's existing Associate's degree program. The WLAC Dental Hygiene program, established in 1973, has had a consistent record of 100 percent of its graduates passing the professional exam. The program was recently awarded a Strong Workforce Gold Star by the State Chancellor's Office in recognition of recent graduates realizing a 303 percent increase in earnings; 78 percent attaining at least a regional living wage; and 100 percent employed in a job similar to their field of study.

West opened in February 1969 with incomplete construction during record-breaking rainfall. Despite the obstacles, a dedicated faculty and staff made it work even holding classes in a muddy parking lot and using camping stoves to keep warm. The "can do" spirit was apparent in the students as well, many of whom had transferred to West from other colleges with semester credits. This is why West's first graduates crossed the stage just four months after the campus opened its doors and the 50th Commencement precedes the actual 50th anniversary date.

Since its founding, West has served over 250,000 students and issued over 21,000 degrees and certificates. Approximately 1,500 degrees and certificates are expected to be awarded this year.

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2 of 2: WLAC's 50th COMMENCEMENT

Today, West offers 24 Associate Degrees for Transfer, a joint program with the California State Universities, also known as “a degree with a guarantee.” West also offers more than 50 career path programs including health care professions, computer science, business, aviation technology, and the unique film / television production program celebrating its 20th year associated with West and its 10th year on the College's main campus. This program, profiled by the Los Angeles Times and on PBS, prepares students for entry-level union trade craft positions as grips, and in set dressing, costume production, lighting and sound. It, along with seven other programs, recently received Strong Workforce Silver and Bronze Star recognition from the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office.

“Our slogan for the 50th anniversary celebration is ‘50 Strong and Growing,’ and it certainly encapsulates the excitement on campus,” observed Dr. James Limbaugh, WLAC President. “Two new buildings will break ground within the next four months, we’ve maintained or surpassed enrollment projections for the past three years, new academic programs are being developed, we are currently in the design phase for a new library/learning center, we have established strong relationships with Culver City and the surrounding region, and our faculty and staff are uniform in their devotion to student success.”

West Los Angeles College is located at 9000 Overland Avenue, Culver City, CA 90230. The college is a ACCJC-accredited community college providing full-time, part-time and online paths to university transfer and career preparation.

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