



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DATE: June 5, 2019

CONTACT: Michelle Long-Coffee, Dir. PR & Advertising
(310) 287-4597 | longcofm@wlaac.edu
9000 Overland Ave. - Culver City, CA 90230

WLAC GRADS FROM CULVER CITY ADVANCE TO UCLA, CAL STATES & CAREERS

West Los Angeles College marked the end of its 50th Anniversary Celebration at their commencement on Tuesday, June 4. Special moments included recognition of the college's second Baccalaureate class which doubled in size from last year to 49 dental hygiene degree recipients. West is one of only 15 California community colleges authorized to offer a bachelor's degree. This was also the first class with graduates who benefited from the College Promise Program that provides one year of free tuition to first-time, full-time freshmen.



Like the student population at West, the graduates' journeys to this milestone were diverse. Ebony Garry had to balance the demands of her four children with the requirements of the classroom; while Juan Gramajo Jr., an active duty U.S. Marine, attended many classes online. Jacqueline Mahoney, already a university graduate, came to West to change direction and become a paralegal. Traditional-age student Sara Rio is the first in her family to graduate from college and part of the afore mentioned College Promise Program. She collected three associate degrees at the ripe old age of just 18. "Since I was a child, I always wanted to go to college," she said. Her determination was so strong that she transferred from University High School to Cheviot Hills Continuation which allowed her to concurrently take more college

classes while still in high school. She took so many that she graduated a year early and entered college with a significant number of requirements completed. Boasting a 3.92 GPA, she has been accepted to all nine University of California campuses and selected UC Berkeley where she will attend on full scholarship.

Approximately 15 percent of this year's 1,200 associate degree and certificate recipients are Culver City, Palms and Mar Vista residents. Five percent are from Culver City. Here are a few stories from Culver City High graduates who are now also West Los Angeles College alumni.



BRUIN BOUND

Juderay Almarino was active in student government at West and a participant in the Transfer Honors



BEATING THE ODDS

Sarah Fey was the featured speaker at West's year-end celebration for NextUp students – current and former



FUTURE PHYSICAL THERAPIST

Corina Paz was accepted to four Cal State Universities and is still deciding if she will choose CSUN or CSUDH.

~ continued ~

WLAC GRADS...continued

Program. “The resources at West exceeded my expectations.” Almario was accepted to multiple Cal State and University of California campus. He is headed to UCLA in the fall.



ENTREPRENEUR / TEACHER

DeAnna Featherstone is headed for Cal State Dominguez Hills where she will complete her bachelor’s degree in business with an eye on running an early childhood education program.

Foster Youth. “Be better than the negative influences around you,” she said. Fey will complete her bachelor’s degree at Cal State Dominguez Hills.



READY FOR MEANINGFUL EMPLOYMENT

Joanna Montes and **Naayin Akyempon** were both participants the College 2 Career (C2C) program which operates in select community colleges around the state. C2C supports the learning needs and employment goals of individuals with an intellectual disability. Montes is excited about entering the field of hospitality while Akyempon is still considering his options.

“West allowed me to take classes at my own pace,” which was helpful when she needed to help a family member fight deportation. Now she is full steam ahead.



HELPING OTHERS

While at West, **Bement Woldegebriel** worked for EOP&S which provides students with academic counseling, tutoring, book vouchers and encouragement. At CSUN, she will study Communication Disorder Science with the goal of becoming a speech pathologist.



FUTURE “G MAN”

Juan Garcia earned his Associate Degree for Transfer in Administration of Justice with an eye on becoming an FBI agent after he completes his bachelor’s degree at Sacramento State University.



J.D. FOR ME

Alexis Andrew completed the first leg of her journey towards becoming an attorney. Her next stop is Cal State Monterey Bay where she will study Political Science. She is appreciative of the great tutoring and other services offered by West’s Learning Center.

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.

###