



PRESS RELEASE

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Citrus College Achieves its Fifth Consecutive Graduation Record Student Leaders Represent Class of 2015's Aspirations and Dreams

GLENDORA, Calif. –

On June 13, Citrus College awarded 2,533 associate degrees to more than 1,300 members of the Class of 2015. This year's commencement program was historic, as it concluded the end of the college's Centennial year celebration. Citrus College was founded on June 5, 1915; today it is the oldest community college in Los Angeles County and the fifth oldest college in California.

"I am very proud of each graduating student for their persistence and determination to complete their associate degrees," said Citrus College Superintendent/President Geraldine M. Perri, Ph.D. "This is a very important accomplishment that will produce additional opportunities for success, and I wish the college's newest alumni the best in their endeavors."

While every Citrus College graduate proudly celebrated their achievements, two students represented the commitment and the drive that empowered all of the students to complete their education: Fariyah Chowdhury and Manuel Ramirez, Citrus College's Woman of the Year and Man of the Year for 2015.

Chowdhury's tenure at Citrus College was defined by myriad activities that included student government, the college's STEM Program (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics), and advocacy at the local and state levels on behalf of community college student access, completion, and success.

The Azusa resident served as the student representative on the Citrus Community College District Board of Trustees during the 2014-2015 academic year. As a participant in the STEM Program, Chowdhury was involved in Research in Science and Engineering (RISE), an interdisciplinary program where she learned to conduct scientific research. She also helped to raise funds for the STEM Program by speaking to local business and community groups.

In early 2015, Chowdhury was appointed to the California Community College League of California's Advisory Committee on Education Services, an opportunity that allowed her to work with California's community college trustees to provide enhanced leadership development for student trustees.

This fall, Chowdhury plans to transfer to the University of California, Irvine or the University of Southern California and pursue a major that combines business with a STEM discipline. "I hope to be a resource to a company or non-profit that serves underprivileged communities or countries and aid them in providing broad and equitable educational opportunities for students," she said.

Ramirez' organizational skills, artistic talent, and cultural awareness influenced the activities that earned him the Man of the Year honor. During the 2014-2015 academic year, Ramirez served as president of the Associated Students of Citrus College, the college's student governance body.

A passion for cross-cultural awareness led Ramirez to establish the college's Native American Student Association. He introduced students, faculty, and staff to Native American culture by organizing events and lectures during Native American Heritage Month, and he coordinated off-campus cultural exchange events.

Ramirez' interest in art led him to organize the Citrus Art Walk, an outside gallery that displayed the portfolios of more than 10 student artists and provided an opportunity for them to discuss their work with guests. He also volunteers for the Pasadena Playhouse and the Los Angeles County Parks and Recreation Department.

A resident of Azusa, Ramirez plans to attend the Institute of American Indian Arts in Santa Fe, New Mexico and earn a degree in fine art. "It is important for me to understand how I can give back to my community. In the future I want to learn more about art and education and how I can continue to serve as a leader in my community."

"Citrus College's students have, once again, demonstrated an outstanding commitment to persistence and excellence, which has resulted in this momentous occasion," said Mrs. Joanne Montgomery, president of the Citrus Community College District Board of Trustees. "Commencement is the beginning of a promising future and a fulfilling life, and I wish to extend my heartfelt congratulations to the Class of 2015."