



BERKELEY CITY COLLEGE

NEWS FOR THE BOARD

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Dr. Angélica Garcia, President

Berkeley City College Class of 2023 Commencement Celebrates Graduates and Hope

Berkeley City College's commencement ceremony honored the class of 2023 at UC Berkeley's Zellerbach Hall on Wednesday, May 24. It was the first in-person commencement ceremony since 2019. **This year, Berkeley City College conferred 962 degrees and certificates to 551 graduates.** Of those graduates, 130 were on hand to walk the stage and receive their diplomas from Berkeley City College President Angélica Garcia in front of over 1,000 family members and friends in the audience.

“Celebrating our accomplishments, we must also recognize the hope that has driven us,” said Valedictorian Parneet Virk. “Hope is knowing there is something wonderful and promising awaiting each of us.”



The theme for commencement was **“Hope.”** Speeches from **PCCD Interim Chancellor Dr. Jannett Jackson, BCC President Garcia, PCCD Board of Trustees President Dyana Delfín Polk, Faculty Senate representative Jenny Yap, Classified Senate representative Jeejun Bertuso, ASBCC President Mazin Saeed, Valedictorian Parneet Virk and Salutatorian Michelle Gallaga** all remarked on the role hope played in their academic journey leading to this occasion.

This year's keynote speaker was **Esteem Brumfield**, the Research Director for the Mass Incarceration Lab at Brown University and Berkeley City College Alum. Brumfield shared the story of his upbringing outside of traditional social norms, his parents facing incarceration and evading law enforcement by living in a school bus in cities throughout California, that left him truant and functionally illiterate until he was 23 years old. After enrolling at BCC, Esteem spent the next 8 years working towards his educational goals, serving as Lead Student Ambassador, VP of Administration for the ASBCC, and Peralta Student Trustee. He earned an Associate of Art Degree in English from Berkeley City College, and transferred to UC Berkeley where he received his BA before earning a Master's of Public Health from Brown University.

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“BCC fosters hope in its graduates,” said Brumfield. “With hope, you find clarity of purpose, and with purpose and hope, you are guarded against cynicism.”

We want to thank all those involved with the ceremony, first and foremost the graduates and their families and friends who

made it possible. We would also like to thank the members of the PCCD Board of Trustees, Interim Chancellor Dr. Jackson and Interim Deputy Chancellor Dr. Stephanie Droker, and the distinguished Berkeley City College administrators, faculty, and staff in attendance. We would like to specially recognize BCC’s 2023 Commencement Committee Co-Chairs, John Nguyen and Susan Truong, and committee members Christine Trowbridge, Djenilin Mallari, Gail Pendleton, Hue Huynh, Jasmine Sumandal, Kiara Allen, Michael Alviljar, Dr. Stacey Shears, Tom Rizza, and Vanessa Phillip for their work in organizing the event.





UCRC & Puente Commencement Ceremony

On Friday, May 26, Berkeley City College's Puente and Undocumented Community Resource Center hosted their inaugural graduation ceremony at BCC. **14 graduates attended, 2 representing UCRC and 12 representing Puente, along with their families and friends. Puente's class of 2023 included 15 total graduates, earning a combined total of 26 certificates and 23 associate degrees.**

The audience was treated to performances by the Berkeley High School Native Danza Group, led by RISE, which featured traditional Central and South American drum music and dances. **UCRC graduate Karen Conejo Cruz, and Puente students Adrian Hernandez (transferring to UC Berkeley majoring in Mechanical Engineering) and Shelsea Reyes (transferring to UC Davis majoring in Design) gave speeches honoring their family, personal upbringing, and academic journey at Berkeley City College. After the graduation ceremony, attendees gathered in the BCC atrium for pupusas, dancing, and music performed by La Mixta Criolla. We thank Puente Project Counselor Dri Regalado, UCRC Coordinator Carolina Martinez, Dean Martín De Mucha Flores, Hispanic Serving Institution Director Lissette Flores, and counselors Luis Chavez, Angelica Pena, and Susan Cuong for organizing the event.**



BCC Community Bids Farewell to President Angélica Garcia

On Thursday, May 25, Berkeley City College administrators, faculty, classified staff, and Berkeley community members attended a farewell party honoring the tenure of Berkeley City College President Angélica Garcia. The party, which was held at the Residence Inn in downtown Berkeley, was an opportunity for the community to thank Dr. Garcia for her leadership and recognize her accomplishments at Berkeley City College. **Honored guests included Berkeley Mayor Jesse Arreguín, Downtown Berkeley Association CEO John Caner, PCCD Interim Chancellor Dr. Jannett Jackson, College of Alameda Acting President Dr. Diana Bajrami, Merritt College President Dr. David Johnson and newly appointed Berkeley City College Interim President Dr. Denise Richardson,** all of whom expressed gratitude for Dr. Garcia's work at Berkeley City College and wished her well in her new role as Superintendent/President of Santa Rosa Junior College.



President's Message: Berkeley City College Por Vida

Dear Berkeley City College Community-

I began my role as President at Berkeley City College right at the beginning of the pandemic when all of us were facing so much uncertainty about the state of the world and the impact on students. These past years have forever changed the future of community colleges and the role we play in the evolving landscape of higher education. It has been my greatest pleasure to work alongside you to make the necessary adjustments to our work amidst such adversity. From online instruction and services to the ways in which we have returned to serving students on campus, I have seen you rise to the occasion in service of students and one another.



Your work bears out in the data – this academic year we:

- Grew in enrollment, retention, persistence, and transfer rates, supported by the “Fall is Free Spring to Success” efforts.
- Secured the future of Berkeley City College by reaffirming our ACCJC accreditation.
- Set the framework for the next five years by completing Berkeley City College’s Educational Master Plan and a unified vision to achieve “equitable student outcomes.”
- Received one of two Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander Serving Institution (AANAPISI) Title III Part A Cooperative grants in the country, which is focused on mental health and language acquisition experiences for AAPI students.
- Increased Latinx student enrollment and success, launching our first Puente cohort.
- Accelerated our Dual Enrollment pathways work through a grant from the College Futures Foundation and the Gates Foundation by focusing on “Dual Enrollment for Equity,” which led to significant increases in first-generation and historically minoritized students enrolling in college courses and securing their progress towards a college certificate/degree.
- Expanded Career & Technical Education programs in ways that serve our local community, such as through the

Community Health Worker Program and Multimedia Arts students contributing to the health education of the impact sugary drinks have on the community.

- Received recognition as a 2023 Champion for Excelling in Equitable Course Placement in Campuswide English Enrollment, Latinx & Black English Enrollment and Black Math Success (**BCC was the ONLY CCC to receive this distinction**).
- Continued to support BCC graduates to transfer at high rates to the UC and CSU campuses, with a significant number transferring this year to the UC Berkeley Haas School of Business.
- Celebrated graduates in person at UC Berkeley's Zellerbach Hall, conferring nearly 1,000 certificates and degrees.

There are even more accolades and honors to recognize, and I am so proud of what we have accomplished together and know that BCC is well on its way to building an inclusive community that is committed to equitable student outcomes. My years at BCC have left an imprint in my soul and identity as an educator. There are many individuals to thank and I will be sure to send you a personal note. As a collective thank you, I want each of you at BCC and throughout the Peralta Colleges and District Office to know that I deeply respect the work and love that you bring to students and one another every day.

As I close my final communication to the Berkeley City College community, I want to center community and the power of family (blood and chosen). Whether you come from a large family, a single-parent family, a multi-generational family, a foster family, or a chosen family of people who care about you, being part of the BCC family is an incredibly unique and loving experience.

My youngest daughter was 4 years old when I began my role, and will turn 8 years old later this summer. My oldest daughter became a teenager and has worn BCC gear to middle school promoting Dual Enrollment, Puente, UCRC, Umoja, and the most recent BCC Staff hoodie. BCC is now part of their DNA, as we have talked about my days, students, and the people I work with over family dinners, trips home from swim practice, and every time a BCC ad has popped up on a billboard or digital ad. They know what a board meeting is and that students get to be trustees to be the voice of students; although, they do wonder if the meetings need to go quite so late. I have shared stories with them about BCC and shared stories with you about them. I believe that, as educators, we need to humanize ourselves so that we may be our authentic selves and hopefully live less fragmented lives. My wife and I spent many late nights working at our dining table after the kids had gone to bed (for the third time). She worked on building and expanding her private practice, while I reviewed draft after draft of accreditation reports and grant proposals, and tried valiantly to respond to emails before the end of each week. Serving my first presidency at BCC was a family affair, *parte de mi vida*, and a role no other college will ever have.

I did not have the privilege of meeting each of you in person, but please know that I care deeply for who you are and the work you do for the sake of students. During opening day in the fall of 2020, I shared with you how my mama reminded me that because I was the president, I needed to remember that the work happens because we all believe in our mission. BCC's mission to "Transform Lives" is alive and thriving because of each and every one of you, dear *colegas*. Thank you for welcoming me, my family, and for giving me the space to bring my full self to serve as your president.

In Community,



Dr. Angélica Garcia (she| her| ella)
President, Berkeley City College



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