Cerritos College Honors Project HOPE Class of 2010

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NORWALK, Calif. - May 10, 2010 - Cerritos College recognized graduates of the Project HOPE (Health Opportunities and Pipeline to Education) Program on Tuesday, May 4, at its sixth annual graduation banquet entitled "Ensuring Diversity in the Health Professions." The ceremony celebrated the graduates' program completion, entrance to health programs, and transfer to four-year universities.

The Project HOPE Class of 2010 included students who were admitted into nursing programs, pre-health professional students who will be transferring to various CSUs and UC campuses, including CSULA, CSULB, UC Berkeley, UCI, UCLA, UCSC and UCSD, and students who earned certificates from the Cerritos College Mental Health Worker Program.

The event master of ceremonies was Maggie Cordero, director of Pathway Programs and coordinator of Project HOPE. Following her introduction Cerritos College President Dr. Linda Lacy congratulated the graduates.

“We are proud of these dedicated graduates for their hard work and commitment to serving underserved communities,” said Lacy. “We wish them the best with their educational goals and future careers in healthcare.”

Dr. Carolyn Chambers, dean of Science, Engineering and Mathematics Division also congratulated the Class of 2010.

The keynote speaker was Richard Rodriguez, adjunct chemistry professor at Cerritos College and former Project HOPE student from the Class of 2005.

Rodriguez encouraged the graduates to keep up their hard work. “You may miss some nights out studying, but without sacrifice there is no achievement,” stressed Rodriguez. He also shared the story of his father who has been a great inspiration to him.

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A generous grant from the College Access Foundation of California allowed for the presentation of multiple-year transfer scholarship awards, each worth up to $12,000, to 11 Project HOPE transfer students: Christopher Bacani, Manuel Candelario, Theo Gonzalez, Ana Hizon, Hee Yeong Kim, Julia Kwon, Vanessa Ojeda, Daniel Orellano, Angelica Omelas, Diana Yanez, and Rey Paolo Roca, who served as the event's student speaker.

“After migrating to the United States I wanted to broaden my horizons and became active in many programs and organizations at Cerritos College,” said Roca. “Project HOPE gave me a great opportunity to grow and better understand diversity.”

Project HOPE is dedicated to increasing the number of underrepresented groups entering, matriculating, and completing health careers. The project aims to create an academic pipeline facilitating the success of minority students in this competitive field. Program activities include: student services geared toward health careers; teaching strategies and courses that increase retention and success of Latino students and other minorities; organized workshops, conferences and research opportunities; community service venues; and peer and professional mentoring. For more information about Project Hope, visit www.cerritos.edu/hope.

Cerritos College serves as a comprehensive community college for southeastern Los Angeles County. Communities within the college’s district include Artesia, Bellflower, Cerritos, Downey, Hawaiian Gardens, La Mirada, Norwalk, and portions of Bell Gardens, Lakewood, Long Beach, Santa Fe Springs and South Gate. Cerritos College offers degrees and certificates in more than 180 areas of study in nine divisions. Annually, more than 1,200 students successfully complete their course of studies, and enrollment currently averages 23,000 students. Visit Cerritos College online at http://www.cerritos.edu/.

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