



NEWS

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Compton College 2018 Presidential Scholars Graduate at Top of Class

Exemplary Compton College students Cynthia Avelino, Michelle Christy, and Cynthia Mendoza were honored as 2018 Presidential Scholars, earning associate degrees and some of the highest GPAs in their graduating class. The three students received their awards at the college's annual Academic Awards Tea, and will use the scholarships to continue their educational journeys as they prepare to transfer to UC Irvine, CSU Dominguez Hills, and UCLA, respectively.

Presidential Scholars represent students who have shown academic strength, singular focus and the desire to reach their highest potential, while overcoming obstacles in the pursuit of their dreams. Compton College's Presidential Scholar program recognizes outstanding graduating students who have a 3.7 grade point average or higher. Here are their personal stories of success.

Cynthia Avelino

Cynthia Avelino graduated with an associate degree from Compton College and an impressive 3.95 cumulative GPA. She is transferring to UC Irvine to major in mathematics. Although she entered Compton College with limited math skills and was placed in Basic Skills math classes, Avelino's resiliency and determination forged her path to becoming a scholarship-earning mathematician who was accepted to the university of her dreams. Avelino recognized her ability to control and take ownership of her educational journey, and with that clarity, she planned a rigorous study schedule and met with her professors for individual review, which helped her greatly improve her math skills.

Her breakthrough moment came when she was not only earning A's, but also gaining a true understanding of the concepts presented in class. "The mathematical concepts became part of my constitution and led me to declare myself a math major," said Avelino. "Math no longer brought me distress, but rather I welcomed its challenge and took pride in my work". In her mission to increase her skill set, Cynthia joined the [Mathematics, Engineering, Science Achievement \(MESA\)](#) program at Compton College, while also working as a math tutor for her peers in the Student Success Center.

Avelino says Compton College provided the resources for her to "maintain a high GPA thanks to an intellectually-spurring and cooperative environment that drove me to master my skills." She believes a future career as a math professor will enable her to maintain her expertise while contributing to the education of others. Avelino understands the importance of giving students time and opportunities to grow. "I did not accept my failures as a high school student," she said. "I did not allow myself to be overwhelmed by my dismal start to college. I made the significant changes

necessary to overcome my poor start, and because of it, I am an award-winning student with dreams of becoming a math professor.”

Michelle Christy

Michelle Christy graduated from Compton College with an associate degree and a 3.9 cumulative GPA. She will be transferring to CSU Dominguez Hills to major in nursing. Christy is an adult learner and a first-generation college student who enrolled at Compton College after several years of balancing work and her responsibilities as a single mother. She says college is a key part of her support system. “Compton College provided an affordable opportunity to continue my education with the help of support programs and abundant resources that allowed me to reach my academic goals.”

Christy’s personal mission is to serve others, and she plans to become a nurse practitioner so she can provide healthcare services to those in low-income areas. Christy regularly volunteers her time by helping to organize events that bring the community together, such as the HOPE Community Health Clinic, Socks for Souls, and the Compton Beautification Project. Through her community involvement, Christy has gained a new perspective on the commonalities we all share. “What I have learned through my experience is that everyone has a dream,” she said. “Everyone has a story, obstacles, or barriers that sometimes make these dreams seem impossible. Individuals need to see that there are options available, and some need to see people who are like them achieve the unthinkable.”

Christy considers it her responsibility to show others in her community that success is achievable, and she believes continuing her education at Compton College has given her the opportunity to do so. “Although I do not personally have an abundant amount of resources to help others, I am committed to doing what I can no matter my position in life,” she said. “I will never forget where I came from, and I will continue to uplift others through leadership and example.”

Cynthia Mendoza

Cynthia Mendoza graduated with associate degrees in political science and history, a certificate in machine tool technology, and a 3.9 cumulative GPA. She is transferring to UCLA as a history major. She is an adult learner who originally enrolled at Compton College to earn a certificate in machine tool technology with hopes to land a good-paying job in the aerospace fastener manufacturing industry. As a single mother of two young sons, Mendoza was determined to master a skill set that would accelerate her career and provide financial stability. Initially, the mathematics involved in her coursework proved to be a challenge. Despite this barrier, she excelled through hard work and finished among the top of her class while earning a certificate in the machine tool technology program.

Upon receiving her certification through the National Institute of Metalworking Skills, the testing proctor said Mendoza’s metal-cutting test performance was exceptionally precise and accurate. As one of only two women in a class of 48 people, Mendoza pushed through her own self-doubt about her ability to understand and work with complicated measurements and blueprints. However, she didn’t let this doubt get in the way of her success. Instead, she hit the books hard, earning A’s on all of her tests and projects.

Fueled by a combination of hard work and determination, Mendoza is proud that she overcame a huge educational barrier. “I realized I could continue my education and earn a higher degree in

order to pursue career, rather than a job.” She says Compton College provided a “firm platform to stand on, complete with full support and a professional, highly educated faculty and staff to depend on. Compton College gave me wings – I can now fly! One day, I plan to give back all that Compton College gave to me, and more,” she said.

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About Compton College

Compton College is the community’s education solution offering a full complement of transfer and degree courses, as well as career and technical education. Students may earn an associate degree or certificate, transfer to a four-year university or train for a career. Compton College is located at 1111 E. Artesia Boulevard, Compton, CA 90221.