



# NEWS

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El Camino College Compton Center | Public Relations & Marketing Department  
16007 Crenshaw Blvd., Torrance, CA 90506  
Contact: Ann M. Garten, Director, Community Relations  
Telephone: (310) 660-3406 | Email: [agarten@elcamino.edu](mailto:agarten@elcamino.edu)

**For Immediate Release**

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## **El Camino College Compton Center Honors Two Students as 2013 Presidential Scholars**

El Camino College Compton Center students Mariela Castro and Albino Celis, Jr. have been named as 2013 Presidential Scholars. Castro also served as the 2013 student speaker during the June 6 commencement ceremony. Castro and Celis received their awards at the annual Academic Awards Tea held in late May. 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. Here are their personal stories of success.

### **Mariela Castro**

Mariela Castro is graduating with a cumulative 3.84 GPA and has been accepted to California State University, Long Beach this fall to continue her studies in business administration. Castro, a single mother of two children, immigrated to the United States in 2005. She first enrolled at El Camino College Compton Center in 2010 with the goal of improving her English language skills. She worked full-time during the day and took advantage of the evening ESL courses offered at ECC Compton Center.

She has taken full advantage of the many programs and student services offered here, including financial aid, which enabled her to advance her education by pursuing an associate degree. Castro is proud she has maintained a high GPA throughout her tenure at ECC Compton Center, and credits the faculty and staff for providing guidance and the academic skills necessary to achieve her educational goals.

Through her experience at ECC Compton Center, Castro is convinced there are no limits when it comes to learning. She describes ECC Compton Center as being one of the greatest influences for change in her life. She believes the experience has helped her to be a better mother, serving as an exemplary model for her children as they set goals for themselves in the future.

### **Albino Celis, Jr.**

Bellflower resident Albino Celis, Jr. decided to advance his learning at El Camino College Compton Center to overcome some of the socioeconomic barriers he faced growing up, and to provide a better life for his family. A young father with limited financial resources, Celis has carried up to 19 units per semester while also providing for his daughter. He has also managed to avoid the pitfalls that claimed many of his peers. Of the fifteen boys in his fourth-grade class, he is one of only three pursuing a bachelor's degree. He graduated from Paramount High School in 2009, and is thankful his sister, cousin and friends constantly reminded him about the importance of higher education and attending college. His plans now include transferring to a four-year college or university to major in business administration. After earning his bachelor's degree, he hopes to attend law school.

As part of the ECC Compton Center's curriculum, Celis says he was introduced to complex works of literature, and attended a wide range of classes, including accounting, economics and law. He believes the exposure to new and advanced problem solving is what inspired him to seek out new possibilities and a future in the business world.

Celis praises ECC Compton Center, which he says allows its students "to discover that higher education is a self-fulfilling journey of enlightenment." He believes the school has greatly enhanced his critical-thinking skills while providing him with an outstanding education.

### **About El Camino College Compton Center**

El Camino College Compton Center 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. El Camino College Compton Center is located at 1111 E. Artesia Boulevard, Compton, CA 90221.

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