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2017 Compton College Graduate Heads to UCLA as Recipient of ‘Blue and Gold Scholarship’

The day that Ricardo Garcia enrolled at Compton College was a day that would change the course of his educational journey, and his life, for the better.

During Garcia’s adolescent and high school years, his family faced financial uncertainty and was evicted from their home—twice. Confronted with a short period of homelessness and then his parents’ separation, he found it difficult to focus on his studies. Now a 2017 Compton College graduate, Garcia looks back on the challenging times in his childhood as defining moments that made him the resilient person he is today.

“While I try not to set limitations for myself, never in my life did I imagine that I would be attending UCLA,” said Garcia, a resident of Compton who is transferring to UCLA this fall to major in sociology. “A college education is valuable and so worth the struggles and challenges we may face. If my story motivates somebody to pursue higher education, than I feel I have done my part!”

Garcia’s resilience was tested upon graduation from King/Drew Medical Magnet High School when he received only one acceptance letter out of the eight universities to which he applied. Garcia was discouraged, but knew he needed to continue his education and enrolled in Compton College because it was close to home. He admits that he was depressed during his first semester, partly because he didn’t know anybody, but he was determined to stick with it.

“I gained some optimism during my second semester when I learned about the EOPS program and was introduced to my Counselor Eckko Blake,” said Garcia. “There are so many resources available at Compton College to help students succeed; all you have to do is take the first step to ask for help.”

Extended Opportunity Programs and Services (EOPS) offers a variety of services to assist economically and educationally disadvantaged students achieve their educational and career goals. Compton College offers this state-funded program to eligible students who

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want to get an education but do not have the resources to enroll in college. EOPS students receive many benefits, including priority registration, funds for educational supplies, academic achievement grants, student enhancement workshops, and more.

“The EOPS Office on campus provides a great sense of community for students,” said Garcia. “There is a real personal connection that develops with the staff, counselors and students. I knew I could go to my counselor, Miss Blake, to help me with a solution to personal or financial problems. I would arrive in a bad mood and leave feeling great!”

Garcia felt supported by the many student resources available which enabled him to concentrate on his studies and work hard to achieve his educational goals. He graduated in June with an associate degree and this time around was accepted to six universities (four UC and two CSU). The academic success he achieved at Compton College earned him the Blue and Gold Scholarship to UCLA, which pays for two years as long as he sustains the eligibility criteria.

Garcia is grateful for the unexpected path on his journey that led him to Compton College. “There are many role models at Compton College, from professors to staff to fellow students,” he said. “The students are very dedicated and take their education seriously. There are many amazing people here willing to help.”

Photo available online:

www.compton.edu/adminandoperations/publicrelations/images/2017/RicardoGarcia.jpg

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.

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