



NEWS

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Compton College Soccer Player Overcomes Obstacles to Earn Associate Degree

Soccer is the one constant in Ivan Vazquez' life. Soccer gave him a family when his family fell apart. Soccer brought out his passion, grit, and motivation. Soccer will lead him into a promising future. The Compton College student-athlete has been kicking around a soccer ball since the age of three and his talents on the field, coupled with his resolve to maneuver past life's barriers, led to his recent honor as a 2018 recipient of a California Community College Academic Athletic Advising Association (3C4A) Achievement Award.

The 3C4A achievement award honors student-athletes who have overcome great personal, academic and/or emotional odds to achieve success while participating in intercollegiate athletics. Compton College Athletic Counselor Shay Brown nominated Vazquez for the award.

"What struck me during my initial meeting with Ivan was his determination, dedication, and "can-do" attitude. The task ahead of him at the time was one few could accomplish, and he never wavered, continuing on to complete his degree in three semesters," Brown said. "Always with a smile, he treats others with respect, kindness and encouragement on and off the soccer field. Ivan has integrity, gratitude, and great appreciation for his education and the opportunities he has been given as a student-athlete. He is a role model for others and has overcome a lot to reach and move forward with his goals."

Vazquez graduated from Compton College in June 2018 with an associate degree and is looking to continue playing soccer and completing his education at a four-year university. His path as a youth growing up in Compton was much less secure. "Growing up in Compton, life was hard for me," Vazquez said. "I was raised in an immigrant family, and it was difficult for my father to provide everything for seven children."

As a 16-year-old attending Dominguez High School, Vazquez was faced with the unthinkable and became homeless after his mother suffered a stroke that left her paralyzed on one side and unable to speak. "My mother was the person who kept the family united," Vazquez said. One month after his mother's stroke, the family split apart. Other family members and friends were not able to take everyone in and Ivan was left to fend for himself. "I spent my days and nights with nowhere to sleep or eat; it was a situation I would never wish upon my worst enemy."

After spending the next two years in and out of juvenile facilities, Vazquez got a break when he was offered a job as a machinist at a pharmaceutical company. Three years later, his hard work has paid off and he still works for the same company. The owners of the small company value Vazquez'

contributions. He says they want him to continue working there while he continues his education and have offered to guide him and help him move into management. He believes majoring in business administration will help him grow with the company.

Working while going to college has enabled Vazquez to take care of not only himself, but also help care for his mother. Since his soccer family has given him so much over the years, he would also like to pay it forward in the future by becoming a mentor to young, talented athletes who lack a support system and guidance to achieve their goals on and off the playing field.

Photo available online:

<http://www.compton.edu/adminandoperations/publicrelations/images/2018/IvanVazquez.jpg>

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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.