



Celebrating 2021 EOPS Graduating & Transfer Students

Dear EOPS graduating and transfer students,

On behalf of the EOPS family, we would like to congratulate you on your achievements at Glendale Community College. We are extremely proud of you and all that you have accomplished. Your dedication, resilience and strong work ethic helped you reach your academic and career goals. As you embark on the next chapter of your life, we wish you great success.

We are excited to celebrate you during our 2021 virtual EOPS celebration event on Wednesday, May 26th from 12:00-1:00 PM. If you are earning a Certificate, Associate Degree and/or transferring, please check your GCC e-mail for an invite and zoom meeting link to participate in our EOPS celebration.

We would like to acknowledge our GCC Foundation for their generosity in purchasing graduation gowns for EOPS graduates this year. Graduating students, please refer to the email sent to you from EOPS about the steps on how to order your gown. We encourage you to wear your graduation regalia during the EOPS celebration event on May 26, 2021.

To our graduates, we hope your educational experience at GCC will help you as you continue onto the next chapter of your life. To our transfer students, we wish you continued success at your chosen university.

We have highlighted some of our EOPS students and their inspirational experiences.

"Don't be afraid. Be focused. Be determined. Be hopeful. Be empowered."

—Michelle Obama

ROBBY DEFFO

Robby and his family migrated to the United States from Cameroon in 2015. He recalls his transition to the United States being difficult as he began high school not knowing how to speak English. After he switched his high school, he took ESL courses and received help from his teachers after school. Thanks to his teachers, campus resources and his mom who pushed him to reach his full potential, he persevered through and improved his GPA, drastically.



He began GCC in 2018 and works on average 30-35 hours a week, while studying full-time. He stated that his first semester in college was challenging. He was overwhelmed with his classes and needed to develop time management skills to successfully pass. He also expressed that in the beginning of his college experience, he had no guidance and felt that he had to navigate college by himself. He was not aware of what he needed to do to reach his academic goals, until he found the Student Equity and EOPS programs. From then on, his counseling sessions were very productive and he felt supported in the decisions he made. He said he is thankful for his counselors who helped him balance his course load, while taking the time to learn about his interests and passion.

Robby is graduating GCC with an a AS-T in Business Administration and transferring to CSUN as a Management major. He also hopes to minor in Human Resources Management. His biggest dream is to one day own a business and give back to his home country in Cameroon.

Robby hopes that current GCC students never feel ashamed to ask for help. He suggests student be opened minded and seek advice to help lead to success. He says "if you are struggling with something, use the counseling and take advantage of the resources in place to help."

SARA ZAHED

Sara can be described as a caring, motivated, and goal-driven person. She and her family moved backed to the United States in 2018 from Iran, after she graduated high school. She took a year off between high school and college and worked 2-3 jobs, 60 hours a week, to support herself and her family. She used her time to also learn more about the higher education system and discover her academic and career goals. Sara is passionate about social issues, equality, equity and wants to help break barriers that impact people. In 2019 she found herself enrolling at GCC as a full-time student. She is studying Sociology and hopes to one day become a lawyer. She will be earning an AA-T degree in Sociology and has been accepted to UC Irvine as a Sociology major.



Sara says her classroom and out of classroom experiences at GCC have helped lead her to where she is now. Her instructors have constantly supported and pushed her to succeed. She further states that EOPS and Transfer Center counselors always created an inclusive environment, helped her understand the transfer process and admissions requirements. She is part of the EOPS Club and holds two positions on the Executive Board; Club Treasurer and IOC Representative. She joined the club because she wants to give back to the GCC and EOPS community and help educate students on opportunities available so that they can reach their highest potential.

She hopes that current and future GCC students are not afraid to challenge and believe in themselves, even during difficult times. She recommends students take advantage of all the resources available and take classes to expand their understanding of diversity to foster cultural competency.

MAYGEN ABI NADER

Maygen is a first generation college student who moved to the United States four years ago with her mother, from Lebanon. She began studying at GCC in 2019 after graduating high school. She remembers the struggles she experienced as she tried to transition to the American culture and understand the educational system, while learning English. Due to the lack of English skills, she felt disconnected from her peers; however, she began to challenge herself to help build her confidence and language skills. She started a club on campus called “Culturally Diverse Club” because she wanted to learn about others and their history, culture, beliefs, and traditions. She believes in inclusion, respecting one another and the importance of learning about people who are different from her. She was also selected to be on the Youth Advisory Council with the LAPD to help at-risk youth through community engagement activities.

At GCC, she is part of the Scholars program, History Club and Feminist Society Club. She is thankful for the opportunities she has had through her club involvement; she learned a lot about herself and made friends throughout the years. She also appreciates all the services and benefits she received from EOPS. Her counseling sessions helped her realize the path she needs to be on to pursue her goals. Maygen will be graduating GCC with an AA-T in History and has been accepted to UCLA as a History major and UC Berkley as a Legal Studies major. She is proudly committing to UCLA. After she completes her undergraduate studies, she will attend law school with the hope to one day practice Immigration or Criminal Law.

Her message to current GCC students is to “get involved on campus. It will help you decide what you are passionate about and will help build your confidence.” She continues to say that college is a place where you can start fresh and do what you are most interested in.



SYUNE GHAHRAMANYAN

Syune was born and raised in Armenia, then moved to the United States five years ago. She has experienced many challenges in life and one of the biggest was the language barrier when she moved to America. She found it difficult to communicate with her peers and her classes were very challenging. However, Syune says “challenges and barriers are what makes my life interesting, without them, my life would not be as interesting and adventurous. Those challenges and barriers pull out my special skills, abilities, and the best of me. However, it is not the number of setbacks or barriers that are significant, but how hard I worked and tried to achieve my successes.”

Syune can be described as an ambitious, dedicated and determined person. She is double majoring and will earn both Administration of Justice and Sociology AA-T degrees in spring 2021. She has been accepted to UCSB, UCSD, UCI, CSULA and CSUN. She is proudly committing to CSUN as a Criminology and Justice Studies major and hopes to one day practice law. She wants to be a person on whom others can rely on when they need guidance and help.

She states that her GCC experience has enriched her life in many ways; she utilized campus resources, she gained valuable knowledge from her classes, and the EOPS program guided her towards achieving her goals. Syune hopes that her peers believe in themselves and their ability to succeed. Her personal message: “if your heart is set on reaching a certain goal, nothing will stop you.”

JESSICA MACUA ELIZONDO

Jessica is a 1st generation college student who came to the United States three year ago from El Salvador. She is deeply passionate about helping others in need and while in El Salvador, she always helped people within her community. She volunteered in a nursing home to care for the elderly, she raised funds to support people who were food insecure and served as an English teaching assistant at school.

She began GCC by attending our Garfield campus and earned a General Office certificate. She says that accomplishment increased her confidence and motivated her to further her education. She then continued her studies at the Verdugo campus and will be earning an AS-T in Business Administration from GCC. She has been accepted to CSULA, CSULB and CSUN for fall 2021. She is excited to be attending CSULB as a Business Administration-Marketing major and has been accepted into the EOP program at CSULB.

She is thankful to the GCC community, professors and EOPS counselors for their support and valuable resources that helped her achieve her goals. She says her EOPS counselor, Roxanne Rafii played a big role in her life. She not only helped guide her towards the right path, but she continuously motivated and championed for her and her needs.

Jessica has always persevered through challenges in life, and she does so because she believes in herself and her abilities. She is passionate, confident and goal oriented. Her ambition is to earn a degree in Marketing and use her skills and knowledge to help small businesses grow and thrive. She continues to say that the road to success is challenging, but believe in yourself, use the resources available, ask for help, and never give up on your hopes and dreams.



SOSE KHACHATOORYAN

Sose is a 1st generation college student who migrated to the United States with her family as refugees from Iran, six year ago. She began studying ESL at our Garfield campus in 2015 and a year later, transitioned to the Verdugo campus. She continued learning to read, write and speak English and as she built her English language confidence, she began taking courses needed to transfer to a university. Sose remembers the first time she stepped foot on GCC's campus; she was both nervous and excited to begin her academic journey. She expressed her gratitude and appreciation to all within the GCC community. Anytime she needed help, guidance and direction, there was always a smiling face ready to help her. Sose is a full-time worker and full-time college student and is excited to be transferring to CSUN in Fall 2021, as an Accountancy major. She will be graduating GCC with an AS-T in Business Administration. After completing her bachelor's degree, she will continue her studies to become a Certificated Public Accountant (CPA).

She is very thankful for all the resources and opportunities that helped her stay on her path. She said that the EOPS program helped with the additional cost of textbooks and provided her with priority registration, which is a huge advantage for a full-time employee. She is very thankful to her EOPS counselor, Shakeh Ataian, who always took the time to connect her to resources, helped her understand the transfer process and pushed her to reach her fullest potential. Sose shares that her path and experiences along the way were not easy, and it took a lot of hard work and dedication. She hopes that all GCC students take time to build relationships within the campus community, and utilize the resources available to help reach their goals.



2021 Dinh T. Luu Memorial Scholarship Recipient

Rylee Happy

On behalf of the EOPS program and Dinh Luu's family, we congratulate Rylee Happy for being selected as this year's Dinh Luu Scholarship recipient. This scholarship honors EOPS students who earn a minimum 3.0 GPA and are majoring within the field of Human Services.

Rylee is a double-major student, studying Psychology and Sociology at GCC and will be transferring to a four-year university soon. She served as past president of GCC's Black Student Union (BSU) organization. In her capacity as president she organized multiple campus activities, facilitated events during Black History Month, created bylaws and led the efforts of the BSU Demands on our campus. She presented the demands to campus leaders and administrators with the hope of creating a better and safer space for her and other Black students. She is a strong advocate for social change and establishing intentional, equitable opportunities to ensure underrepresented students succeed in higher education.

Rylee is a resilient student who has experienced many challenges in her life, yet she persists and focuses on her wellbeing, while maintaining 4.0 GPA. She has always enjoyed helping others and creating a sense of community for those who feel alone. She hopes to one day earn a doctorate degree in Psychology and become a cognitive neuropsychologist. She wants to focus on the impact of PTSD, then implement new therapy techniques for individuals impacted by trauma.

Rylee, we wish you all the success in your educational, career and personal endeavors.



To our continuing EOPS students...

We hope that reading the success stories of your peers will help motivate you as you continue to achieve your academic, career and personal goals. EOPS and the GCC community are here to support you throughout your journey.

As you are aware, GCC will continue with remote instruction and services in the summer and fall terms. Stay connected with the EOPS department through our social media and our website for the most important and current information.

Find us online www.glendale.edu/eops and @gcceops on Instagram, Twitter & Facebook

