



**TO: ALL STAFF**

**From: Dr. Cheryl Marshall, Chancellor**

**Date: May 26, 2017**

Faces smiling for the camera. Proud relatives waiting with flowers and balloons. A jubilant march past applauding faculty and administrators. It's Commencement time, and soon our campuses will overflow with tired, happy, and grateful graduates. These ceremonies are always such a great reminder of how important our work is. They are powerful visual proof that student success isn't just a catchphrase—it's the result of real people who have worked hard to achieve their goals.

I feel a little like I'm graduating too, having spent almost a full year at NOCCCD! I've learned so much during my time here. I've learned about our people and our culture. I've learned where we succeed and where our opportunities lie. I've learned and grown as a leader. And I've learned how special each of our students are.

One of the things that continues to intrigue me is how many different life pathways our students take to reach Commencement. After decades in this business you'd think that I might be a little jaded, but each year the personal triumphs of our students inspires me again. I was so proud to learn that the largest graduating classes at both Fullerton College and Cypress College are set to walk this Friday and Saturday! For those of you who aren't able to attend the festivities, I want to profile just a couple of our incredible student stories so that you can share in their excitement:

### **Finding a Career Passion at Cypress College**

Initially, Phuoc Vo had a very traditional higher education experience—graduating with a degree in pharmacy from the University of California, Santa Barbara. But soon after getting an actual job in that field, Phuoc discovered that processing prescriptions wasn't for him. When he moved back to Orange County, Phuoc learned about the Cypress College School of Culinary Arts and Hospitality Management program. From then on, he decided to pursue his passion for food and enrolled in the program. This summer, after graduating from Cypress College, Phuoc will join the Marriott Voyage Global Leadership Development Program. He was the top choice in the nation for the program, which prepares participants for hospitality and culinary management positions, and will start working at the JW Marriott Desert Hot Springs this summer. “This was the first year that Marriott decided to partner with a community college,” said Phuoc, “and I was lucky to receive the honor of being the best of 20 culinary students across the United States applying for this internship. I astounded recruiters and chefs with the plate I presented to them,

and I strongly believe I've opened a world of possibilities for students majoring in culinary arts and hospitality in community colleges.”

### **Faith at Fullerton College**

In 2015, after a fifteen-year break away from school, Suzanne Row began her studies at Fullerton College. As a returning student majoring in Business Administration, Suzanne has worked diligently towards her educational goals. Having served as the Children's Ministry Director at Oasis Community Church, and volunteered at Rowland Heights Christian School, Suzanne seeks to use her education to better the world in which she lives.

However, what makes Suzanne's story truly unique is that for the past 12 years she has been battling multiple cancerous tumors in her right leg. These have limited her ability to walk without assistance, causing constant severe, debilitating pain, and sleep deprivation. Despite the recovery time, pain, and sickness from multiple unsuccessful surgeries for her condition, Suzanne is graduating from Fullerton College and will be transferring to Hope International University in the fall. Her ability to overcome obstacles is a testament to her faith, her character, and Fullerton College. She is very much looking forward to working toward her Bachelor's degree in Business Administration and tackling any other challenges that come her way.

### **Perseverance is Paramount at SCE**

Germania Sanchez was born and raised on a farm in the Dominican Republic. Growing up, Germania encountered many obstacles due to her being deaf. She attended a school for the deaf for six years, but was forbidden to use sign language. At 18, Sanchez immigrated to the United States to ensure a better future for her and her son. She arrived in Florida and with the help of her church, she started to learn and communicate in sign language. Once married, Germania moved to California and dreamed of going back to school. With the support and encouragement of her husband, Sanchez enrolled at the School of Continuing Education. With much hard work and dedication, and the support from her counselors and instructors, Sanchez has accomplished her goals including learning English and becoming proficient in sign language. Although it took her nine years to complete, Germania is proud to now call herself a high school graduate. Germania looks forward to transitioning to Cypress College in the fall to earn an associate degree.

It's stories like these that make me excited to come to work each day. I am so honored to be a part of this District and proud of all of our staff, faculty and students! I wish you all a motivating and meaningful Commencement Ceremony and a restful summer!

**Cypress College** Minds. Motivated.  
**School of Continuing Education** Change. Cultivated.  
**Fullerton College** Excellence. Elevated.  
**NOCCCD** Greatness. Achieved.