



SOUTHWESTERN COLLEGE

*Student of
Distinction Award
2012*



Ana Alicia
Bahena

Major: Communications

Main Educational Goal: To transfer to a four-year university and earn a Bachelor's degree in communications, then an Elementary Teaching Certification.

Life Goals: To teach at an underprivileged elementary school, serve in Teach for America and teach abroad in South America.

Significant Achievements:

- Arts Editor of the Southwestern College Sun
- President of the ASTRA Volunteer Club
- Fall 2012 Vice President of Phi Theta Kappa Honors Society
- Feature Writing Award at State Journalism Competition

In one sentence, how would you like others to remember you? That vegetarian girl who always lends a helping hand and bakes delicious cupcakes.

Nominated by: Max Branscomb



Angel
Castro

Major: Psychology

Main Educational Goal: To transfer to a four-year university and earn a Bachelor's degree in social work.

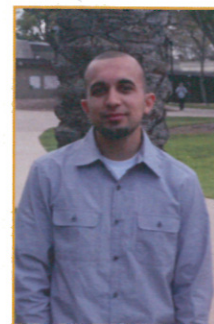
Life Goals: To earn a Ph.D. in social work and operate my own orphanage and Foster Care program.

Significant Achievements:

- Fall 2011/Spring 2012 Social Vice President of the Associated Student Organization
- Spring 2011 Senator of School of Counseling and Personal Development
- Spring 2011 Vice President of the Can't Stop Won't Stop Humanitarian Club
- Fall 2011 President of Can't Stop Won't Stop
- Spring 2010 InterClub Counsel Representative

In one sentence, how would you like others to remember you? As a humanitarian who left the planet Earth better by advocating for children, women's rights, and animals, as well as the conservation of the environment, such as water, clean air, plants and other natural resources.

Nominated by: Diana Avila and Laura Ryan



Alex
Chavez

Major: Biochemistry (specialization in neurology / neuroscience)

Main Educational Goal: To earn a M.D. - Ph.D. dual degree

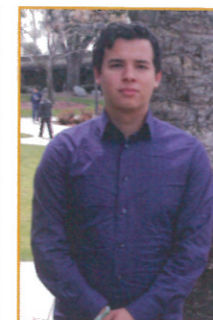
Life Goals: To become a neurosurgeon / neuroscientist.

Significant Achievements:

- Selected for undergraduate research experience program at The Center for Sensorimotor Neural Engineering at Washington State University
- Employed by pharmaceutical company based in the biomedical Genelux Corporation S.D. Science Center
- Two-year mentor in Bridges to the Future, an SDSU Research Foundation internship program
- Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society
- President's Honor List

In one sentence, how would you like others to remember you? As one who assiduously promotes betterment in not only himself, but also in those around him

Nominated by: Dr. Raga Bakhiet and Dr. Nouna Bakhiet



Angel F.
Flores

Major: Business Administration

Main Educational Goal: To earn a Master's degree in business administration.

Life Goals: To create a consulting firm that specializes in helping businesses succeed.

Significant Achievements:

- President's List
- EOPS Star
- Lions Club International Member
- Volunteer Coordinator for One Sight Foundation (Mexico Missions)
- ASO High School President

In one sentence, how would you like others to remember you? As a successful businessman dedicated to helping others.

Nominated by: Yadira Garcia



**Jesus A.
Flores**

Major: Computer Engineering

Main Educational Goal: To earn a Bachelor's degree in computer engineering at SDSU or USC, Master's degree in computer science.

Life Goals: To create my own non-profit organization benefitting orphaned children.

Significant Achievements:

- Chicano/Latino Coalition Scholarship
- Southern California Food & Commercial Workers Union Scholarship Award
- Southwestern College President and Vice President's List for outstanding achievements
- Treasurer of the Robotics Club
- Volunteer in Microsoft California Connects Community Program to increase computer literacy in underserved communities

In one sentence, how would you like others to remember you? As a role model for other Latinos going into engineering.

Nominated by: Adriana Garibay, Daniel Moody, and Dr. Raga Bakhiet.



**Alexia
Gutierrez**

Major: Environmental Engineering

Main Educational Goal: To earn a Bachelor's degree in environmental engineering at USC, and Master's degree at MIT.

Life Goals: To become an environmental lawyer and help improve the quality of life of people around the world.

Significant Achievements:

- ASO – Senator at Large
- Chair of the ASO Sustainability Task Force
- Phi Theta Kappa Member
- SHPE Member
- Best Martial Artist Student

In one sentence, how would you like others to remember you? As an audacious person who is willing to help others and make the world a better place.

Nominated by: Norma Cazares



**Dulceamor
Mota**

Major: Nursing

Main Educational Goal: Transfer to SDSU and eventually earn a Master's degree in nursing.

Life Goals: To become a nurse practitioner that will aid people in need.

Significant Achievements:

- SWC President's List
- SWC Vice President's List
- Phi Theta Kappa
- San Diego Coast Keeper A Community Organization

In one sentence, how would you like others to remember you? She was very resilient on the challenges given to her by life and never gave up trying to overcome obstacles, making her a great example for others to keep on pushing through life's disparities so as to enjoy life's pleasures.

Nominated by: María Elena Solis



**Paulina
Pineda**

Major: Philosophy and World Literature

Main Educational Goal: To earn a Law Degree

Life Goals: To become a published writer and to create an organization dedicated to educating children about environmental issues.

Significant Achievements:

- Active Member of Phi Theta Kappa
- Volunteer at Paradise Creek Educational Park
- 2012 All-California Academic Team
- 2011 ASO Academic Excellence Scholarship Recipient
- Fall 2010, Spring 2011 and Fall 2011 President's List

In one sentence, how would you like others to remember you? I would like to be remembered by my writing.

Nominated by: Noreen Maddox and Perry Grosse



**Ayded
Reyes**

Major: Biology

Main Educational Goal: To earn a Bachelor's degree in Biology, attend medical school, become an M.D. and serve this community as an obstetrician and philanthropist.

Life Goals: To become an obstetrician and serve low-income women in this community. To create a non-profit 501 (c) (3) medical organization to serve mothers and children.

Significant Achievements

- All-American in cross country in 2010 and 2011, and in track and field in 2011
- 2011 Pacific Coast Conference Most Valuable Player in track and field
- SWC 2011 Athlete of the Year for winning the institution's first-ever team state championship
- Set SWC track and fields records in the 800 meters, 10,000 meters and for the distance medley
- Tutor, volunteer and translator at the Sherman Heights Community Center

In one sentence, how would you like others to remember you? Someone with a positive attitude always willing to help others.

Nominated by: Max Branscomb, Laura Ryan, Dr. Duro Agbede, Jaime Salazar, Ed Cosio and Norma Cazares



**Amerika
Rocha-
Aboujaoude**

Major: Nursing

Main Educational Goal: To earn a Bachelor's of Science in Nursing and, Nurse Practitioners certification/degree specializing in pediatric cardiology.

Life Goals: To attend Medical school, then private practice with Doctors Without Borders. Travel the world providing medical care to children.

Significant Achievements:

- Captain of the SWC women's volleyball team
- Fifth in California for Libero's with the most digs
- Student Athlete of the Week
- President's List and Vice President's List based on academic performance

In one sentence, how would you like others to remember you? The woman who always stood up for what was right, spoke with eloquence, treated everyone with kindness and respect, and a good person who made a positive difference.

Nominated by: Ed Cosio and Angela Rock



**Esther
Sakhi**

Major: Paralegal Studies: Bilingual

Main Educational Goal: To transfer to a four-year university.

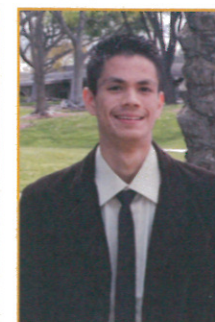
Life Goals: To provide paralegal and documentation services to the San Diego community, especially in the area of immigration and naturalization. To profoundly impact the values, beliefs, faith and well-being of our community.

Significant Achievements:

- Volunteer work at various women's centers, and orphanages in the U.S. and Mexico
- Successfully raising five awesome children, 3 of which are currently enrolled in higher education programs and are demonstrating outstanding achievement
- Member of the SWC Paralegal Club
- Demonstrated courage, commitment and perseverance in obtaining a higher education degree and academic excellence while overcoming the effects of a debilitating pulmonary condition

In one sentence, how would you like others to remember you? Someone of great faith who would get the job done, even when extraordinary circumstances might lead one to think the contrary.

Nominated by: Sherilyn Salahuddin and Darlene M. Poisson



**Juan
Manuel
Huerta
Salazar**

Major: Architecture

Main Educational Goal: To acquire knowledge and understanding of the world around me by stimulating my intellect in a variety of subjects. My purpose is foremost to expand my mind, and the degrees obtained along the journey will reflect only a fraction of the enlightenment that I seek. I intend to start with an Associate's degree in architecture and then pursue higher credentials at other institutions of higher learning.

Life Goals: By combining the wisdom provided by non-academic affairs with the cogitation of man-made concepts, I intend to unveil the purpose of life and death. With the knowledge acquired in the field of architecture I yearn to leave a physical legacy that inspires people to strive for further understanding in order to forge a better future for coming generations.

Significant Achievements:

- Surpassing life's difficult lessons by maintaining a positive attitude towards uncontrollable life events and circumstances
- Member of the Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society at Southwestern College
- The honor of being admired by the extraordinary people that play a part in my life due to the amount of dedication that I put in my academic work

In one sentence, how would you like others to remember you? I would like to be remembered as an honest individual with an insatiable thirst for knowledge and a desire to leave a lasting legacy that serves as an example to follow.

Nominated by: Sandy Calderon



**Ramiro
Rodriguez**

Major: Mechanical/Nuclear Engineering

Main Educational Goal: To earn a Bachelor's degree in Mechanical/Nuclear Engineering at UC Berkeley. Master's in Mechanical/Nuclear Engineering at MIT.

Life Goals: Contribute to the world's energy efficiency and safety of the ecosystem through the improvement of nuclear energy.

Significant Achievements:

- President, Robotics Club
- Treasurer, Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers (SHPE)
- MESA Calculator Olympics-Level 1 (First Place)
- UCLA Center for Community College Partnership (CCCCP) – Scholar
- Cal Summer Experience (UC Berkeley)

In one sentence, how would you like others to remember you? As a motivated and noble individual who strives for the best, not only for himself but for others.

Nominated by: Kathy Parrish



**Susana
Paola
Sanchez**

Major: Psychology

Main Educational Goal: To earn a Master's degree with an emphasis in autism.

Life Goals: A strong mission that I have in life is to help other children with autism. My greatest interest is to help the parents of children with autism to improve their lives and help them to reach balance in life. I want to become an expert in working with autistic children and their parents. It would be important for me to understand children's parents and support and help them in the process they will go through. Being the parent of an autistic child and with my education and my personal experience, I can help and advocate for these parents. I also plan to encourage women with psychological challenges to further their education. I am convinced that my desire to serve others in this capacity will contribute positively to society.

Significant Achievements:

- Lovaas training courses (equivalent to upper division psychology college classes) and applied the training to my son who experienced remarkable improvement
- Treasurer, Power Club at SWC
- Women's Opportunity Awards in support and recognition of efforts to enhance career potential

In one sentence, how would you like others to remember you? As a persistent, organized woman who is determined to achieve her goals and accomplish her mission in life.

Nominated by: Diana Avila



**Christian
Santiago**

Major: Liberal Arts: Social and Behavioral Sciences

Main Educational Goal: To earn a Bachelor's degree in International Relations.

Life Goals: To work for the State Department and play an active role in improving national and international security.

Significant Achievements:

- Community service through my church and the Marine Corps Reserve
- Academic achievement and physical fitness awards
- Corporal in the Selected Marine Corps Reserve
- Southwestern College Police Academy Graduate, Class 51
- Target operations great team hero

In one sentence, how would you like others to remember you? As a man dedicated to achieving a safer and thriving world through mutual understanding, trust and respect.

Nominated by: Lisa Ballesteros



**Arturo I.
Sotomayor
Gayosso**

Major: Mechanical Engineering

Main Educational Goal: To earn a Master's degree from San Diego State University.

Life Goals: To always stay involved in the Chula Vista community, give back to the MESA program and promote science and engineering in the Hispanic community.

Significant Achievements:

- Vice President of the SWC Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers (SHPE)
- Community outreach events in Tijuana through my church Iglesia Evangelica San Pablo
- California Connects Program as a computer literacy trainer through SWC MESA
- Served in the U.S. Army as a combat medic from 2003–2007 in the 514th Medical Company (Ground Ambulance), 62nd Medical Brigade
- Graduated from Eastlake High School, class of 2003

In one sentence, how would you like others to remember you? As a loving person with great moral fiber, a person who excels in everything they do and pushes others to do the same.

Nominated by: Dr. Raga Bakhiet



**Amber
Sykes**

Major: English

Main Educational Goal: To transfer to UCSD, earn a Bachelor's degree in Literatures of the World and a Master's degree in Library Science.

Life Goals: To become a librarian in the public school system and publish children's literature.

Significant Achievements:

- Editor-in-Chief of the Southwestern College Sun
- 1st place in newspaper layout in the state among community colleges
- National championships for The Sun, swcsun.com and El Sol magazine

In one sentence, how would you like others to remember you? As the girl who can balance hard work and leadership with excessive trips to Disneyland.

Nominated by: Max Branscomb



**Denyse
Tontz**

Major: Telemedia

Main Educational Goal: To transfer to a four-year institution.

Life Goals: To become a director and producer for film and television.

Significant Achievements:

- Feeding the homeless at Los Angeles Mission
- Kourt's Krew Annual Celebrity Benefit Concert
- Vice President's Honor List
- Professional Actress
- Motivational speaker

In one sentence, how would you like others to remember you? The one whose head stayed the same size.

Nominated by: Max Branscomb



**Jesse
John
Ward**

Major: Business Administration

Main Educational Goal: To transfer to Berkeley, UCLA or SDSU to earn a Bachelor's degree in business administration. J.D. in business law and a Master's in business administration

Life Goals:

- To become a nationally recognized motivational speaker, targeting community college youth and people without a GED but with dreams as big as mine. To become a successful franchise entrepreneur and use my time wisely

Significant Achievements:

- Honors graduate
- Senator-at-large for the ASO for two semesters, Phi Theta Kappa member for 2 1/2 years
- Will graduate with 3 AA degrees
- President's List, four semesters (3.97 GPA)

In one sentence, how would you like others to remember you? I would like to be remembered as someone who is intellectually curious yet far from over-zealous, absolutely ambitious yet aware of life's purpose, patient and respectful, empathetic and tactful.

Nominated by: Diane Gustafson, Maria E. Martinez and Veronica Gerace



**Imran
Yasin**

Major: Mechanical Engineering

Main Educational Goal: To earn a Master's degree in financial engineering from UCLA and Engineer Training (EIT) certification.

Life Goals: To become a certified professional engineer and financially support humanitarian organizations to prevent human trafficking and promote literacy. Fulfilling my mom's dream of being interviewed on CNN.

Significant Achievements:

- Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society
- President of Mu Alpha Theta (Mathematics Honor Society)
- Math and chemistry tutor in MESA and recipient of Lipp Foundation's Academic Excellence Scholarship
- Gold and silver medal in Chemistry and Mathematics respectively in MESA Calculator Olympics
- Vice President of ASTRA Club and Chemistry Club ICC Rep

In one sentence, how would you like others to remember you? As a diligent, honest, persistent, caring and trend setter who wants to achieve something in life about which no one has ever thought of.

Nominated by: Dr. Raga Bakhiat, Richard Fielding, Todd Caschetta and Lauren Zinola