

New York State's Proprietary Colleges Celebrate Graduates

The Commencement Edition: Honoring the Class of 2019

For more than a century, New York's proprietary colleges have been a workforce pipeline for businesses in a variety of industries across the Empire State. The 12 members of the Association of Proprietary Colleges (APC) have been educating students on campuses and online from Buffalo to Brooklyn,

helping them achieve their personal, professional and academic goals.

Last year, APC member colleges conferred more than 3,500 bachelor's degrees, 3,100 associate degrees, nearly 800 master's degrees and 294 certificates. In total, there are more than 7,600 individuals who made a commitment to enhancing their education and improving their lives. APC is

extremely proud of the history of its member colleges and their commitment to providing an affordable and quality education to everyone.

This commencement edition features student achievement and provides a line of sight to the faculty who together make all of those degrees a reality.

Berkeley College Graduates Are in Demand in New York's Workforce

Berkeley College's Class of 2019 includes more than 2,200 graduates, representing the rich diversity of the U.S. with high representation of LatinX and African-American students. Family and friends joined graduates at the commencement on May 10, 2019.

"Every one of us at the Berkeley College Commencement ceremony shares the pride of these graduates because we know the difference a college degree will make in their futures, and how the upward mobility of these graduates will impact future generations," said Michael J. Smith, President of Berkeley College.

"The average age of the Berkeley College undergraduates receiving an award today is 28. Yes, the unemployment rate is low,

but these new graduates may well continue to overcome obstacles and work hard to earn their way. They are prepared and ready, and we look forward to their continued success. So many have demonstrated their commitment to give back to their communities and pay it forward."

Just under 39 percent of the graduates entered as first time, full-time students; and, 84 percent identify as minorities. Berkeley College offers a career-focused experience with students able to take advantage of traditional and online classes, with programs in more than 20 fields of study.

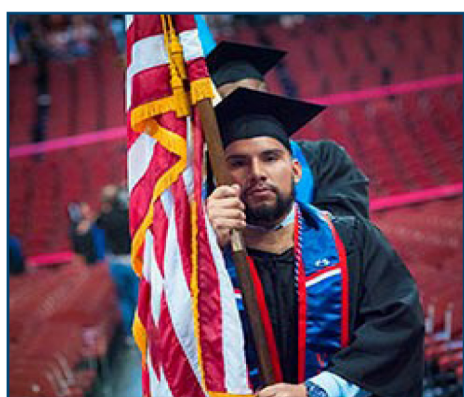
Michael Iris, Associate Vice President, Alumni Relations and Career Services presented the Alumna of the Year award to Karen Pena, Berkeley College Class of

2009. "In addition to her love of learning, Karen actively gives back to the community through volunteer efforts that promote her Peruvian heritage and helping others," said Mr. Iris. "Karen cites her education and raising four children as a single parent among her greatest achievements thus far. Her own mother, her children and grandson continue to inspire her every day."

Student Development and Campus Life Vice President Dallas Reed, PhD, presented the Outstanding Student Award to Cynthia Caruso, Class of 2019. While Ms. Caruso was initially uncertain about returning to college as an adult, she knew it was the right decision, especially when she found out she could earn her degree online. She received Dean's or President's

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List honors every semester. She recently accepted an invitation to serve on the Berkeley College Online Advisory Board.



Mauro "Ricky" Zambrano of Lyndhurst, NJ earned his Bachelor of Science in Justice Studies – Criminal Justice.

Mr. Zambrano quickly became a leader at Berkeley's New York campus, where he served as president of the Berkeley Spartans, a student-veterans club affiliated with Student Veterans of America. Mr. Zambrano also interned as a Veterans Outreach Specialist with Bergen County Veteran Services in Hackensack, NJ. Following graduation, he will join the Division of Family Guidance in Bergen County, NJ, a resource for New Jersey families and at-risk youth. He hopes to pursue a Master's degree and to establish a nonprofit for veterans.



Amal Bendriss of Bloomfield, NJ - who is also a native of Morocco, earned her Bachelor of Arts degree with honors, magna cum laude in Graphic Design.

In Morocco, Ms. Bendriss was a middle school art teacher and freelance fashion designer, but when she came to the United States in 1998, she struggled to learn the English language. Ms. Bendriss worked in retail to support her family and two children, finding it difficult to land a job in a creative field without upgrading her knowledge of the software. She thrived at Berkeley College, becoming a Peer Tutor, a high-achieving member of the Honors Program as well as the National Society of Leadership and Success.



Watch video from Berkeley College's commencement