



# BARSTOW COMMUNITY COLLEGE

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Public Information Office

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### **BARSTOW COMMUNITY COLLEGE GRADUATES RECORD NUMBERS**

Barstow, CA – Barstow Community College (BCC) opened the doors to the James R. Parks Gymnasium on Friday, May 17, 2019, to honor and celebrate the graduating class of 2019. With a record number of graduates, 494, set to receive 583 degrees and/or certificates, family members and friends, faculty and staff were all on hand to witness the occasion. Setting this graduating class apart from the ones before were 40 students who were among the first group of local high school graduates who entered the Barstow College Promise program that was launched fall of 2017.

It was especially fitting that Eloy Ortiz Oakley, Chancellor of the California Community Colleges, a system with 115 colleges across the state, delivered the keynote commencement speech to Barstow's graduating class. Oakley helped form the nationally recognized Long Beach College Promise which has been replicated throughout California as a model education partnership that provides the first year of college tuition free and that engages high school teachers and administrators to work with college faculty and staff to create streamlined pathways toward students' attainment of their educational goals. The Barstow College Promise graduates at Friday's event demonstrated the program's success, as there were more than ten times the number of graduates completing in two years after high school than with previous cohorts of incoming students.

Chancellor Oakley, the first Latino chancellor of the California Community Colleges system and a product of the California community colleges himself, connected with the Barstow graduates by taking a selfie with them seated behind him. In his address, Chancellor Oakley stated, "I get where you are coming from. I get where Barstow is coming from. And it's communities like this, it's students like you, that make California great."

After student speaker, Melissa Schafer, who graduated with an Associate of Science degree in Welding, shared her story of overcoming a series of seemingly insurmountable obstacles to complete her program, Chancellor Oakley was the first to leap to his feet as Ms. Schafer received a standing ovation and roaring applause from her fellow graduates and all in attendance.



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Affirming what Ms. Schafer conveyed about her college education equipping her with the tools needed to provide a more stable and financially secure future for herself and her family, Chancellor Oakley urged the graduates to remember one thing as they move on to the next step, "What you receive here at Barstow Community College today, I guarantee you, will serve you for the rest of your life."

Notable GPA figures: Cum Laude honors (3.25-3.49) 79 graduates; Magna Cum Laude (3.5-3.74) 73 graduates; Summa Cum Laude (3.75-4.0) 51 graduates.