

66th Annual

FULLERTON  
COLLEGE

*Students of  
Distinction  
Ceremony*

Friday, May 5, 2023

5:00PM-7:00PM

Fullerton College  
Cruz Reynoso Hall

321 E. Chapman Ave RMs 224-228  
Fullerton CA 92832

# Students of Distinction 2023

Each year twenty (20) students are honored and publicly recognized for their outstanding achievements at the Students of Distinction Awards Ceremony, hosted by Student Life and Leadership.

Each student selected for this prestigious award will receive a scholarship sponsored by Associated Students, Dr. Janet and Henry Emoto, Schlinger Students of Distinction, District Management Association (DMA), and various donors from Fullerton College.

Students with the highest score overall from each category were forwarded to the final selection committee, who selected the top two students to be awarded tonight as the “Distinguished Student of the Year.” Students of Distinction is a tradition that has spanned 66 years at Fullerton College since 1957. We congratulate you on being part of this college legacy.

ONCE A HORNET, ALWAYS A HORNET!



# Program Schedule

5:00PM | CHECK-IN  
Light appetizers and refreshments

5:30PM | Chloe Serrano  
Fullerton College Student Trustee- Elect

5:35PM | Dr. Cynthia Olivo  
President of Fullerton College

5:45PM | Master of Ceremonies  
Dr. Naomi Abesamis | Director of Student Life and Leadership  
Dr. Joe Carrithers | Associated Students Advisor

5:50PM | Opening of Awards Ceremony

Presentation of Students of Distinction 2023

**ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT**  
**PERSONAL ACHIEVEMENT**  
**COMPETITIVE ACHIEVEMENT**  
**SERVICE ACHIEVEMENT**

6:45PM | Distinguished Student of the Year

Stephanie Rodriguez | Associated Students, Student Services Specialist  
Alicia Contreras | Student Life and Leadership, Student Services Specialist  
Les' Sei Crockrom | Student Life and Leadership, Administrative Assistant

6:55PM | Closing Remarks  
Dr. Cynthia Olivo, President of Fullerton College

7:00PM | GROUP PHOTOGRAPH

# Students of Distinction 2023



Malena Santos

## *Academic Achievement*

I am a woman in STEM who has an absolute passion for Biology and Medicine. I appreciate the wonderful resources and faculty members that I have been afforded while at Fullerton College. I want to excel academically at all the institutions I will attend so that I can be the best doctor that I can be.



Julianne Le

## *Academic Achievement*

After graduating high school in 2020, I took a gap year and moved from Louisiana to California. I enrolled at Fullerton College as an English major and gradually became involved in our school's community through opportunities like the Hornets Tutoring program and the student newspaper, The Hornet. I am hoping to attend CSULB, UCI, or UCLA next fall where I will continue to work to highlight marginalized voices.



Jacob Lopez

## *Academic Achievement*

Hello, my name is Jacob Lopez and I am currently majoring in mechanical engineering with aspirations of graduate school. My time at Fullerton College has allowed me to pursue research at a top university while simultaneously preparing me for upper division coursework. I look forward to continuing my relationship with the faculty and students I've met as I progress through my career.

# Students of Distinction 2023



## Yiheng Dai

### *Academic Achievement*

Even though with bipolar disorder and ADHD, I am still capable to earn a 4.0 GPA and serve my community.



## Tifannie Nguyen

### *Academic Achievement*

My name is Tiffanie Nguyen, and I am a psychology major. At the start of my academic journey at Fullerton College, I was unsure of what I wanted to pursue. However, through the various guidance and courses I took, ranging from art history to astronomy, human sexuality, and political science, Fullerton College has deepened my understanding and development of the self. Moreover, it has made me realize my passion for mental health. In the future, I hope to delve more into exciting educational endeavors and educate others on psychological wellness.



## Natalie Johnston

### *Competitive Achievement*

Natalie Johnston is a second-year Fullerton College student who majored in English. At Fullerton College, they were part of the Honors Program, the Promise Program, the Theatre Department, and Alpha Gamma Sigma-Epsilon Chapter. They are transferring to a four-year university to get their bachelors in English and then a masters and a doctorate in order to teach at the collegiate-level. She is very grateful for her time at Fullerton College, where she was able to rediscover her love of learning.

# Students of Distinction 2023



## Rosemary Han

### *Competitive Achievement*

Hello! I am Rosemary Han, a current biology major and an aspiring astrobiologist or biomedical scientist. During my time at Fullerton College, I was able to build myself and my goals for the future. I've meant countless people whom I cherish very much and have guided me in numerous ways. Furthermore, being a part of the speech and debate team has drastically changed my perspective on life for the better. If I could experience Fullerton College all over again, I would do so in a heartbeat.



## Ylianna Fernandez

### *Competitive Achievement*

Ylianna Fernandez is currently enrolled as a second-year student at Fullerton College. She is planning on transferring and specializing in Radiology. Ylianna was given the opportunity to play on the Women's Golf Team this year where she placed second at Regionals in both Individuals and Teams. She was also able to place in the top seven at State. During Ylianna Fernandez's time at Fullerton College, she has been able to grow as a student-athlete and as a person.

# Students of Distinction 2023



Kobe Newton

## *Competitive Achievement*

Coming here to Fullerton, as I'm sure many know or have at least heard of the show, was really my LastChanceU. On the word of high school coach, Coach Perry Webster took a chance on a mentally and physically drained kid from Portland, OR with very little relevant or recent film or any sort of statistical evidence that I could produce at any level of collegiate basketball. The journey to becoming who I am today, and who I will continue to become in the future would perhaps be a much different one if it wasn't for my amazing experience here at Fullerton College, through the care and dedication of my coaches and counselors I've been held to a standard of excellence that I will continue to hold myself too, as it has been a recipe for success for me in the classroom and of course... on that court(2023 STATE CHAMPS BABY!!!)



Jordan Moreno

## *Competitive Achievement*

I came into Fullerton College in the summer of 2020 when Covid was at an all time high and joined the soccer team. I took the next two and a half years to complete my Associates degree while playing on the soccer team. Having such a supportive group of coaches, teammates, athletic trainers, and counselors I was able to succeed in all of my classes and make great memories at Fullerton College. I will forever be grateful for all of my mentors at Fullerton College who made sure my education always came first.

# Students of Distinction 2023



## Jessica Tieva

### *Personal Achievement*

Jessica Tieva is an Active Duty Army Veteran of 7 years. She has served in the Army Reserves for the last 4 years out of Garden Grove, California. Jessica is a student veteran in Fullerton College since Spring of 2023. She has served as a work study student in the Veterans Resource Center for nearly two years. She is transferring in Fall 2023 to pursue a degree in Psychology. Jessica plans to obtain a PhD in Clinical Psychology. She has applied to Harvard University, Amherst College, North Eastern University, and Boston University. She has been admitted to Long Island University, Bridgewater State University, UMass Boston, and UMass Lowell.



## Madison Eli

### *Personal Achievement*

My name is Madison Ell, and I am a mathematics major with plans to transfer to a UC this year. During my time at Fullerton College, I have been involved with the Science Club and the Math Colloquia, both of which have helped me discover my passion for getting involved in mathematics research. I have presented my work at different conferences across the country and hope to earn a Ph.D. and become an academic someday. As someone who is disabled and has faced health obstacles for years, I am very grateful for fellow peers and faculty who have inspired me to become the best person I can be and to keep chasing my intellectual interests.



# Students of Distinction 2023



## Francisco Chavez

### *Personal Achievement*

Francisco is an Art Major with hopes to attend Art Center College of Design and pursue a career in Illustration. During his time at Fullerton, he found multiple avenues to express himself and remain engaged amongst his community of peers. Aside from his art, he has engaged in various research projects, awareness events, and academic circles in representing the ignored in spaces they cannot represent themselves.



## Luis De La Parra

### *Personal Achievement*

I am an older age student at the college. I put my education first, I come to school to better my life, start a career, not to fit in or make friends. I believe you can reach your goals if you take action towards them. I am on disability because I suffer from a severe mental illness, which hasn't stopped me from being on the Dean's List.



## Tobias Teng

### *Personal Achievement*

Tobias Teng is a martial artist going into acting. Tobias plans to transfer to UCLA to train and improve both as an actor and martial artist. He wishes to create films that help represent true traditional Chinese culture.

# Students of Distinction 2023



## Hamza Soboh

### *Service Achievement*

Hamza Soboh is a 16-year-old graduate, earning three associate degrees in Economics, Mathematics, and Interdisciplinary Studies. During his time at Fullerton College, he has served as president of Fullerton College's Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society chapter, Beta Kappa Tau, and as an officer on the Fullerton College Speech and Debate Club, while also running his own nonprofit organization. Hamza plans to complete a Bachelor's in Economics before going on to law school and practicing as a lawyer.



## Paloma Foster

### *Service Achievement*

My name is Paloma Foster, a political science major who is forever grateful for the opportunity of allowing me to serve as your Student Trustee for the past year. Would you believe if I told you that I was a formerly incarcerated juvenile, teen mom, and recovering addict? This is my Micah and Cairo, my sons, my moons and my stars. Everything I do, I do for you.



## Fiza Valiulla

### *Service Achievement*

I am a political science student and started my journey at Fullerton College out of high school. I am the Vice President of Public Relations for Associated Students as well as the Student Assistant for the Honors Program. I have worked in on-campus efforts and off-campus efforts to help minority communities. Fullerton College gave me many opportunities that I would have never otherwise been able to accomplish.

# Students of Distinction 2023



## Ben Ahn

### *Service Achievement*

Hello, I am Ben Ahn, student of psychology at Fullerton College with an emphasized interest in neuroscience, cognitive science, and clinical psychology. In my ongoing academic career on becoming a neuropsychologist, I have worked with children on the autism spectrum as a licensed applied behavior analysis therapist and am currently employed by the college's health center working as a pioneering peer behavioral health educator under the director of behavioral health services Dana Timmermans. Maintaining a cumulative GPA of 3.86, I have the honor of being in the college's High Honors List amongst my distinguished peers. My experience at Fullerton College has also been tremendously fruitful interpersonally from the development of meaningful relationships with students, professors, and faculty members; and it was through purposeful dialogue, and the moments of connection that succeeds, that interpersonal relations were carefully nurtured. I find immense significance and gratitude from these relations, the fact that we can come together under civility and playfulness, and grow; and this growth, and the people and processes that enable it, is what I believe to be the true honor of being a student at Fullerton College.



## Jackson Henry

### *Service Achievement*

Jackson Henry is a second-year Fullerton college student majoring in Communications with plans of working in the digital media/film industry. He was born and raised in Fullerton, California, and graduated from La Habra High School in 2021. He largely credits Professor Balma, as well as the Umoja Community Program, as pivotal figures in his Fullerton College journey. Through them, he was introduced to significant volunteering, occupational, and networking opportunities that would define his academic journey.

# *Selection Committee*

## Academic Achievement

Jennifer Merchant  
Anne Negus  
Kaitlin Kroupa  
Antoinette Triefenbach  
Isaac Choi

## Competitive Achievement

Dr. Albert Abutin  
Jaime Perez  
Marcia Foster  
Nichole Crockrom  
Jolene Enriquez

## Service Achievement

Khaoi Mady  
Deborah Paige  
Francis Mummery  
Denise Leacock-Kendall  
Jennifer Morales

## Personal Achievement

Dana Timmermans  
Annie Liu  
Michael Baker  
Chynna Barnett  
Robin

## Distinguished Student of the Year

Rena Martinez-Stluka  
Dr. Nick Arman  
Citlally Santana  
Teresa Perry-White  
Chloe Serrano

**THANK YOU TO OUR FULLERTON COLLEGE MANAGERS,  
FACULTY, CLASSIFIED PROFESSIONALS, AND STUDENTS  
WHO SERVED ON THE 2023 SELECTION COMMITTEES!**

# Special Thanks

## Refreshments:

SODEXO DINING SERVICES

## Facility Assistance:

FACILITIES, MAINTENANCE &  
OPERATIONS DEPARTMENT

## Vendors:

AWARDS BY PAUL, ANAHEIM, CA

## Photographer:

LINDA BRINEY

## Program Design:

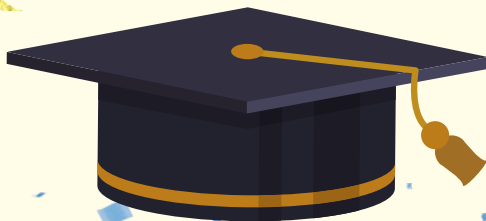
ISABEL TRUJILLO-RUUD

## Student Life and Leadership Team:

DR. NAOMI Q. ABESAMIS  
DR. JOE CARRITHERS  
STEPHANIE RODRIGUEZ  
ALICIA CONTRERAS  
LES-SIÉ CROCKROM  
ISABEL TRUJILLO-RUUD  
SAMUEL BAE

JACKLYN HORWOOD  
WILLIAM ESCOBAR  
ASHLEY CORTES-TENORIO  
DOMINIQUE YEPEZ  
JACOB STONE  
JULIAN ORTEGA

**Student Life and Leadership and the Associated Students co-sponsored the Students of Distinction Scholarship Recognition Program in an effort to recognize and reward outstanding achievements in all fields of endeavor at Fullerton College.**



*Congratulations!*



Fullerton College