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Hope and Perseverance Themes of Cuyamaca College Graduation Ceremony

Over 500 degrees and certificates awarded to the Class of 2010

EL CAJON – Under a bright summer evening sky, students looking forward to a bright future were urged to have hope and to persevere no matter the odds at the 32nd annual Cuyamaca College commencement ceremony on Wednesday, June 2.

Hundreds of family members, friends, and colleagues cheered on the students who earned 378 associate's degrees and 128 certificates this year. Graduates ranged in age from 19 to 65; women outnumbered men almost two to one.

Hope was the theme of the remarks by this year's keynote speaker, Dr. Chris Chaves, Deputy Chief for Faculty and Staff Development, Joint Forces Staff College in Norfolk, Virginia. Dr. Chaves began his own education at a community college and is a former San Diego resident. He saluted the graduates for their hard work, courage and commitment, and commended their families and friends for sticking with them.

Dr. Chaves said, "It was hope that first brought you to Cuyamaca College, and hope that brought you back today." He urged the graduates to help others, remain optimistic and persistent, and to hold high expectations for "the magic and miracles that will happen to you when you help others, when you are optimistic and persist."

Class of 2010 Valedictorian Bushra Rezoqi shared her own story of hope, optimism and persistence in her address. A Chaldean immigrant who fled her native Iraq in 2001, Rezoqi first lived in Colombia and Ecuador, learning Spanish as her third language before she came to San Diego.

At the podium, Rezoqi said, "How is it possible I stand here today, speaking to you in my fourth language?" The mother of three children began her Cuyamaca College journey by enrolling in English as a Second Language classes in 2006. She continued to take courses and found a new passion, accounting. She received her associate's degree in accounting, all while raising her three young children, running a household

and working in her brothers' market. Rezoqi noted that she even excelled in advanced composition as her English improved. Rezoqi told graduates, "Do what's in your heart, and you will succeed."

Rezoqi will continue her studies in accounting this fall at San Diego State University, taking a perfect 4.0 grade point average with her.

Cuyamaca College President Dr. Stuart Savin presided over his first commencement ceremony after coming to campus two months ago. Addressing the Class of 2010, Dr. Savin said "The college community is proud of each and every one of you for reaching this milestone." Dr. Savin noted that the commencement affirmed Cuyamaca College "is a vibrant educational institution with quality academic programs and comprehensive student support services."

For more information about Grossmont and Cuyamaca colleges, including how to register online for fall semester classes, go to www.gcccd.edu.

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