



LOS ANGELES COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT

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Legislative and Governmental Relations Division - Office of the Chancellor

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: June 14, 2022

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**Entertainment Icons Danny Trejo and Constance Marie
Speak at First Annual Mi Gente Graduation**

An innovative and inclusive program celebrating LACCD's Latino heritage took place at East Los Angeles College on June 5



LOS ANGELES (June 14, 2022) — The Los Angeles Community College District (LACCD) held its inaugural Mi Gente Graduation on June 5th with movie and television legends Danny Trejo and Constance Marie Lopez (“The George Lopez Show”) headlining a program that honors the educational achievement of Latino students from all nine campuses and celebrates the District’s diverse mosaic of Latino culture, music, and heritage. The celebratory festivities included Aztec dancers and mariachi music.

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More than 60% of LACCD students are Latino, with the largest percentage being of Mexican-American descent, and significant numbers of Salvadoran, Guatemalan, and Honduran students. The Mi Gente Graduation celebrated all of these cultures with a procession of flags carried by students to start the ceremony.

The Mi Gente Graduation is the first such ceremony in the 53-year history of LACCD, marking a significant milestone for the District and an important example of its continued leadership in inclusivity and equity, and honoring its students' success in culturally relevant ways.

"LACCD prides itself on welcoming all students, particularly those from immigrant backgrounds who are often the first in their families to go to college," said LACCD Board President Gabriel Buelna, Ph.D. "We are excited to hold this celebration of the Latino heritage and culture represented by so many of our students, and look forward to making this an annual tradition."

KTTV reporter Gigi Graciette served as the celebration's Mistress of Ceremonies, introducing the speakers, including LACCD Chancellor Francisco C. Rodriguez, Ph.D., LACCD Board President Gabriel Buelna, Ph.D., and other keynote speakers, including Trejo and Lopez. Trejo gave the inaugural Mi Gente Graduation Keynote, while Lopez delivered the Graduation Celebration Keynote. In addition, three prominent Latino entertainers served as name readers for the graduating class: actors Richard Montoya, Fabian Alomar, and producer and comedian Jeff Valdez, who pioneered English-language Latino programming. They were accompanied by popular artist, Emilia Cruz.

The Mi Gente Graduation speakers have deep roots in the Los Angeles community and their examples provide a roadmap for success for LACCD students—most of whom are first-generation college graduates—to pursue their dreams through education.

"At LACCD, our strength and resolve derive through the rich, cultural diversity of our students, like those represented through this celebration," said LACCD Chancellor Francisco C. Rodriguez, Ph.D. "The Mi Gente Graduation Celebration allows us to honor and celebrate the Latino and indigenous heritage of our students and their family members in a manner that respects their past and foreshadows the future through education."

The ceremony was held on Sunday, June 5, 2022, at Weingart Stadium at East Los Angeles College (ELAC), 1301 Avenida Cesar Chavez, Monterey Park, CA 91754. Several hundred students representing all nine LACCD campuses and their families attended. The graduating students included those who have completed their Associate of Arts or Science Degrees, Associate Degree for Transfer, or a Workforce Certificate.

About the Los Angeles Community College District

We are the Colleges of Los Angeles! LACCD (www.laccd.edu) is the nation's largest community college district, educating about 250,000 students annually at its nine colleges that serve the residents of more than 36 cities and communities from 900 square miles of Los Angeles County. Since 1969, the District has been providing an important learning pathway for students seeking transfer to four-year colleges or universities while also offering two-year degrees and certificated training programs to Southern California's diverse workforce in many specialized trades and professions. Follow us on Facebook, [@LACCD](https://www.facebook.com/LACCD), and on Twitter, [@laccd](https://twitter.com/laccd), and Instagram, https://www.instagram.com/laccd_edu/ @laccd_edu.

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