

*Extended Opportunity Programs  
and Services  
(EOPS)  
Month of Celebration*

*51 Years of Excellence, Service &  
Commitment*

**September marks EOPS Month!**

This month, EOPS programs across the state of California (CA) celebrate 51 years of service and advocacy. The EOPS program originated from a time of adversity and civil rights protests. The need to create a program to ensure students with economic and social barriers receive equitable access to programs and services to achieve academic success in college, was very apparent.

Since its beginning in 1969, EOPS has served students who have been historically underrepresented and affected by economic, language, social and educational barriers. The EOPS program provides access and support to facilitate the successful and timely completion of students goals and objectives. EOPS guides, supports, and advocates for students.

The EOPS program serves to inform students about the various educational pathways and opportunities available to them and commits to the development of the leaders of tomorrow.

**The EOPS program at Glendale Community College (GCC) is proud to celebrate and recognize our current and former students by sharing their stories of resilience and triumph.**



Michelle Rios

Michelle Rios is a re-entry college student, mother, worker and Political Science major. She began GCC in Spring 2018 and is now preparing for fall 2021 transfer to continue her education to earn her bachelor's degree.

Michelle has experienced many challenges, yet has persevered through the obstacles in her life. As a single mother, she is determined and motivated to reach her academic and career goals.

Michelle reminisces about the first time she began GCC and she was uncertain about her major and career path.

She explained "after going through a very tough time in my life where I had to witness my family being split apart due to deportation, is when I finally realized I wanted to major in Political Science. I knew it was my destiny to fight for injustices, fight for others who are not able to fight, and give them a voice." She continued to say, "I had to learn to stand on my own two feet." Her personal experiences and passion to fight for justice led her focus more on herself and her education. She describes herself "as a young advocate for immigration."

Michelle states that the EOPS program has been instrumental to her success at GCC. She considers the program to be beneficial and valuable. The EOPS program helped her stay on track, helped her regain her financial aid when it was in jeopardy, provided emotional support and is now assisting her with the transfer process. She says "I do not think I would have come this far without the EOPS program." Michelle feels that the EOPS program has provided her with book vouchers and educational counseling, but most importantly that EOPS sincerely cares for her.

Michelle encourages all students to seek academic counseling during their first semester and to invest in themselves and their educational experiences. She hopes students seek career counseling and take advantage of other resources, such as the Transfer Center. She believes getting involved on campus and volunteering for something you are passionate about is important; she recommends students use the resources available at the Multicultural and Community Engagement Center.

***"College is tough and it is very easy to get lost, and EOPS is not just a program where you show up for your counseling appointments, they are much more, they genuinely care for their students and help as much as they can, and that is why I encourage students to consider EOPS."- Michelle Rios***





*Rosario Gomez, M.S.*

Rosario Gomez is a GCC and EOPS alumna, and currently works as a Counselor and Instructor at Los Angeles Valley College. She started GCC in 2009 and successfully transferred to California State University, Los Angeles in 2012 with the support of her EOPS Counselor James Castel De Oro. Upon graduating high school in East Los Angeles, Rosario had plans to start working for her family's small business. Growing up in a single parent household, Rosario initially did not have plans to attend college due to her familial responsibilities, but was inspired to apply to GCC after her aunt took her to tour the campus. She loved the campus and applied the same day!

Upon starting GCC, Rosario was unsure of her major, and was referred to meet with a Career Counselor. With the help of Career Counselor, Martha Cuevas, Rosario learned more about

herself and how her values influenced her career choices. After a lot of career research, she decided to pursue the Rehabilitation Services at CSULA which ended up being a great fit for her. Rosario was inspired by the support she received, and growth she experienced, at GCC and within the EOPS program, and was motivated to help others who faced similar life circumstances and experiences. After completing her Bachelor's degree at CSULA, Rosario applied and was accepted into graduate school.

Rosario shares that EOPS Counselor, James Castel De Oro, Professor John Greg Williams, and Career Counselor Martha Cuevas were the biggest influences in her education. She states that James and Martha helped her navigate the world of college and guided her through some her most difficult decisions. She thanks James and Prof. Williams for helping her navigate the vast differences between her academic and familial responsibilities. As a first generation Latina in college, Rosario shares that she often fought battles against her cultural norms in order to advocate for herself. Although she had support from her family, she felt a lack of empathy.

Rosario shares that the time she spent at GCC helped her grow to the professional she is today. She credits James for encouraging her to go to graduate school. She shares that if she could go back in time to her first semester in college, she would tell herself "Everything will be ok. You're going to do great!" She believes that the EOPS program helped her understand the importance of setting goals and gave her the motivation to buckle down and finish the semester or "homestretch" like James used to tell her. Through support from the EOPS program she was able to develop the courage and independence to find the answers she was looking for, and seek help when needed. While in the EOPS program, she describes that once she met with an EOPS counselor she felt like she passed "GO," and felt like she was making progress in her education. She encourages all students to apply and get the support they need to pass "Go" and get closer to the "homestretch."

### **Tips from Rosario:**

- Attend your professors office hours! Your professors are here to help you
- Take advantage of Library Workshops to learn how to do research, cite sources and create a work cited page properly
- Get help from the writing center to improve your writing skills if you need additional support
- Participate in Math Tutoring to get additional support with your math courses
- If you ever need someone to talk to, participate in Mental Health counseling at the Health Center. There was a time in my life where I did need to talk to someone and the sessions really helped.
- Order a Breakfast burrito at the Cafeteria! They have the best breakfast burritos I've ever had!

Dr. Cuellar started taking classes at GCC in the spring of 2001, six months after migrating to the United States from Mexico. He grew up in a large nuclear family in a small rural town in the state of Chihuahua, Mexico. Picking crops in the fields during summers in elementary school made him realize not only the importance of hard work, but also the significance of education, which gave way to his aspirations to break the cycle, and be the first in his family to obtain a higher education.

By moving to the United States, Dr. Cuellar shares that he discovered that among the defining personal characteristics that sometimes act as social barriers, such as skin color, nationality, and gender, and language, language is the only one over which we have control. Such a realization prompted him to embrace the idea of language as a means to articulate his identity. After completing his requirements and transferring from GCC, he decided to major in Spanish as an undergraduate at UCLA.



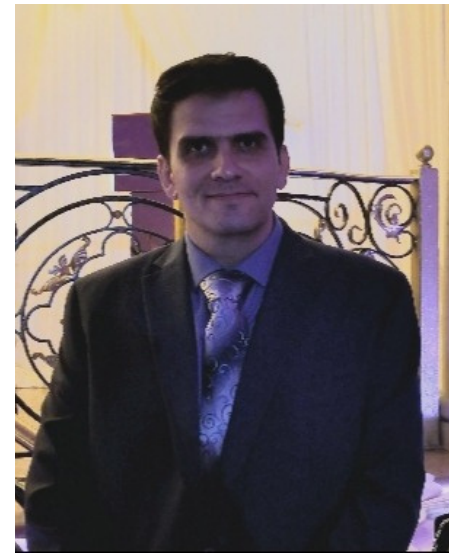
Dr. Manuel Cuellar, PhD

Dr. Cuellar is currently an assistant professor of Spanish and Latin American/Latinx literary and cultural studies at The George Washington University. Throughout his academic journey, he has turned to his background as a resource to reshape how he approaches scholarship and teaching while encouraging students to tap into their own personal journeys as important sites of knowledge. This unique trajectory, from the fields in rural Mexico to community college and then graduate school, taught him the value and impact of diversity and equity in the classroom, as well as the necessity to create new forms of knowledge. He shares that it was his education but also his life experience that got him to where he is now. He identifies as a queer Latino immigrant, community college graduate, and first-generation professor at the nation's capital. Dr. Cuellar shares that if he could go back in time to his first semester in college, that he would tell himself three things: *to be kind to yourself, to always ask for help or clarification, and not to be embarrassed or ashamed for not knowing.*

Dr. Cuellar shares that one of the most transformative realizations he had during his academic journey is that *he did not know what he did not know.* He asks: How was I supposed to if no one had ever pursued higher education in my family, let alone in a new country and in a different language? He shares that EOPS helped him understand and then navigate the educational system in the United States and believes that EOPS gave him the support and resources to figure out how to balance his academic demands and life responsibilities. He states that his counselor, James Castel De Oro, guided him through his educational journey, and was his mentor during his 4.5 years at GCC. According to Dr. Cuellar, James met a shy, ESL Mexican migrant and supported his path to self-discovery and academic fulfillment.

Dr. Cuellar thinks of EOPS as a space to foster one's academic and personal skill set and encourages any student who is considering applying to EOPS to not hesitate. He believes higher education is more than completing courses and fulfilling requirements; it's a life journey. He strongly encourages all students to become part of the campus life in whatever capacity: from participating in student organizations to taking advantage of the tutoring and writing centers and supplemental instruction (SI) sessions. While at GCC, he worked as an SI leader and writing tutor and he also founded one student group (ESA) and was a founding or active member of several others (OLHE, ALAS, and the Italian Club). He shares that these groups made a big difference in his life because they helped him feel like he really belonged and that he was an integral part of GCC.

Wilson Artoonian immigrated to the United States with his family in 2016 as a refugee from Iran. From the moment he entered the United States, he was eager to start his college education. He began GCC in 2017 and started taking ESL courses. He is passionate about business and is majoring in Accounting. He says he enjoys working with numbers, doing calculations and analyzing data.



*Wilson Artoonian*

Wilson considers himself a lifelong learner. He is always eager to learn new things and accomplish what he sets his mind to. He doesn't believe in the word failure. He states "the secret to success, is knowing that there is no failure." He continues to say, the bumps on the road are a "bridge to victory."

Wilson says that the EOPS program provides him with the financial assistance needed to continue achieving his academic goals. He expressed, EOPS counselors always provide the best advice related to academic, career and personal interests and needs. He continues saying EOPS counselors are constantly educating and encouraging him to advance his skills. Wilson states that EOPS counselor, Roxanne Rafii, has provided him the support and guidance he needs to persevere through rough times, and she truly believes in his ability to succeed.

## *A Message to our EOPS Students*

Hello students, I know that we are currently in a time of many challenges and uncertainties but I am so proud to see how resilient and strong you are. EOPS is fully behind you and it is our primary goal to see you thrive!- Jessica Alvarez



Dear EOPS students, we believe in your ability to succeed and reach your goals! Be proud of every step you have taken and continue to do your best. If you need to talk to someone, know that our virtual doors are always open. – Ana Boduryan

"When you know where you're going, every step you take becomes a right step in that direction." Unknown.

Talk to your counselor about your career interests who can help you make a right decision towards your major. If you need a career assessment, EOPS will cover your career assessment fees. Talk to your counselor about that.- Elmira Nazaryan

Hello EOPS students, Please remember that while we continue to experience dramatic, uncontrollable changes and transitions in our environment on every level, there is a large portion of our lives over which we have control, and that is our inner lives. How we take care of our health needs including sleep hygiene, mental health, hobbies, nutrition, activity, and small-scale social interactions, are vast areas over which we have some influence. Having personal routines that are predictable and positive, and prioritize self-care, are more important now than ever. Pick one of these areas and build new habits or strengthen old ones. Know that we are also available virtually to help guide, support and refer you to appropriate campus and community services. Wishing you much success and health this Fall semester. - Roxanne Rafii

Hi Students! I know that the spread of COVID-19 has limited our interaction and some of the opportunities you may have been looking forward to but "Don't let what you cannot do interfere with what you can do" (written by John Wooden). I encourage you to challenge yourself to find creative ways to connect with others, seek remote opportunities, and set intentional academic and career goals. I wish you all a very successful semester! And remember, EOPS is here for you!- Melinea Abramyan

# EOPS Updates

Remember, EOPS services are conducted remotely this term.

- All EOPS students are required to meet with their EOPS counselor three times by December 16, 2020. To schedule an EOPS counseling appointment, send appointment requests to [eopsdesk@glendale.edu](mailto:eopsdesk@glendale.edu)
- Register for EOPS workshops
- Join EOPS Live Support
  - Monday-Thursday 10:30-11:30 AM & 4:30-5:30 PM
- Use EOPS Chatbot to help find answers to general EOPS questions.

*“Great things come from hard work and perseverance. No Excuses.” - Kobe Bryant*

*Work hard and stay dedicated, EOPS Students! And remember, EOPS is here to support you every step of the way!*