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## **Commencement, special events celebrate graduates**

PALM DESERT, CA – May was a groundbreaking month for College of the Desert, with seven events honoring graduates across all disciplines and culminating in a commencement ceremony that included a record 1,200-plus students.

The ceremony was held at the Indian Wells Tennis Garden on May 25, 2022. Graduates from the classes of 2020 and 2021 were also recognized as they could not have an in-person commencement due to COVID-19 restrictions.

Students Tyler Peters and Keyashia Cecilia Jackson delivered the 2022 commencement speeches before their fellow graduates.

“The students we celebrated this year should be especially proud of their accomplishments and for completing this part of their educational journey during a pandemic. It speaks volumes about their incredible dedication and ability to overcome challenges,” said Superintendent/President Martha Garcia, Ed.D.

At a special event on May 17, 13 graduating students who applied to be commencement speakers delivered their addresses at an inaugural Commencement Student Speaker Event.

Each year, the College invites graduates to compose a speech they would like to present during commencement. Upon reviewing this year’s entries, College of the Desert created a new event, held at the College’s Pollock Theatre, to allow all applicants to be heard.

The speaker event audience included faculty, staff, Board of Trustees, College Leadership and College of the Desert Foundation donors.

Participants received \$250 scholarships as a token of appreciation.

“We have much to celebrate at College of the Desert and we are proud to have played a role in these students creating their tomorrow,” said College of the Desert Foundation President Christine Anderson, Ed.D.

Also on May 17, nearly 1,000 graduates who are transferring to four-year universities were invited to a ceremony at the McCallum Theatre to celebrate their acceptance and receive a transfer medallion to be worn at graduation.

Of the transfer students, 405 participated in the commencement ceremony.

In other events:

- 27 graduating nursing students received their special Registered Nurse pin and were welcomed into the profession
- 25 students were honored for graduating from the College's Public Safety Academy – 11 from the Basic Firefighter Academy and 14 as Basic Peace Officer Training Academy Cadets
- 15 retiring professors were acknowledged at commencement, with six recognized emeriti
- Six faculty received tenure after demonstrating strong commitment to student learning and effective teaching
- 20 instructors were honored for earning an American Council on Education (ACUE) credential, which distinguishes their commitment to educational excellence

"We have much to celebrate at College of the Desert and we are proud of the accomplishments of our students, faculty and retirees," Garcia said.

Select videos of all of the graduation special events and commencement are available on College of the Desert's YouTube channel at [youtube.com/CollegeoftheDesertOfficial](https://youtube.com/CollegeoftheDesertOfficial).

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