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College of the Desert Graduates Class of 2025

PALM DESERT, CA— On May 27, 2025, College of the Desert celebrated the graduation of the Class of 2025 at Acrisure Arena. The 1,920 graduates represented 29 countries and earned a combined total of 2,183 degrees and certificates.

Among the ceremony's many highlights were an empowering message from student speaker Angelica Andrade, the presentation of the Faculty of the Year award to Dr. Giuseppe Vezzoli, and Val Martinez Garcias' inaugural event as College of the Desert's new Superintendent/President.

In a touching moment, Dr. Vezzoli reaffirmed why he received the honor of Faculty of the Year with these words, "This award is for you, Roadrunners. Particularly, I want to dedicate this award to the undocumented, disabled, and transgender students. I want you to know that you are seen, you are loved, and you are an essential part of this community, this beautiful mosaic."

In her speech, student speaker Angelica Andrade expressed, "I am driven by the belief that education is a tool for empowerment. It's not just about academics, it's about helping others find their own strength, overcome their obstacles, and unlock their potential." Andrade's inspiring story was a testament to perseverance and the value of education. As a teen mom, Andrade decided to get her GED and eventually pursue a career in education. More than 20 years later, she had the privilege of achieving her degree in sociology and psychology in the same class as her son.

This year's commencement ceremony stands not only as a milestone in the lives of each graduate but also in the history of College of the Desert. In Superintendent/President Val Martinez Garcia's speech he stated, "I stand here not only as your president, but also as a proud community college graduate. So, I don't just understand the significance of today—I've lived the impact it will have on you and your family for years to come."

The ceremony embodied what College of the Desert stands for and strives to provide for its students. It was also the perfect way to welcome Superintendent/President Val Martinez Garcia into his official role.

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