



MEDIA RELEASE

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San Bernardino Valley College Opens AB 540 Dreamers Resource Center

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE (San Bernardino, CA)—San Bernardino Valley College hosted a Grand Opening for its brand new Dreamers Resource Center (DRC) on Tuesday, April 14th. The center has been established to help students who meet AB 540 criteria get the assistance they need to start and/or continue their college education and achieve their career goals. The DRC will focus on successfully transitioning Dreamers into college by providing academic advising, counseling, referrals to student services programs and peer-to-peer advising in a welcoming environment where they can connect with campus and community resources.

A standing-room-only crowd in the atrium of the Liberal Arts Building was on hand to hear SBVC Vice President of Student Services Dr. Ricky Shabazz and President Dr. Gloria Fisher welcome the attendees, who then heard from John Longville, President of the San Bernardino Community College District Board to Trustees. President Longville talked about the importance of the AB 540 legislation and how the district has been working to implement its programs at both SBVC and Crafton Hills College.

Johnny Conley, the Interim Director of the college's First Year Experience program, emcee'd the event and after Longville's comments, he introduced Henry Vasquez, Acting Chairman of the Native American Community Council of San Bernardino and Riverside County. Vasquez and Hector Guzman, SBVC student, then performed the blessing ceremony, saluting the four corners of mother Earth, along with the sky above and lands below, with a conch-blowing ceremony.

With all the welcomes concluded, Grand Marshal Dr. Enrique Murillo, a professor at Cal State San Bernardino and long-time immigration reform advocate, took the podium. Dr. Murillo spoke about his personal challenges and the path he followed that has led him to the teaching profession and his leadership position in immigrants' rights issues.

Following Dr. Murillo's address, SBVC student Isabel Rodriguez, herself an AB 540 student, gave a very engaging account of her personal experiences growing up in the US and going to school. She

expressed her gratitude that the Dreamers Resource Center was now available to help students like her pursue their dreams.

Next up were two SBVC alumni, Paula Venegas, who is now working on her BS at UC Riverside, and Dennis Sandoval, who is studying for his bachelor's degree at Cal State Los Angeles. Both recounted their challenges and successes. Clearly, students like these are exactly why AB 540 was introduced and passed, as they are both well on the way to achieving success and becoming role models for many more to follow.

Next came the accolades. First, Ashley Jones presented a commendatory plaque to Board President Longville, Board Member Gloria Macias-Harrison and SBVC President Fisher from Assemblywoman Cheryl R. Brown. Next up was San Bernardino City Councilmember Virginia Marquez, who presented a commendation from the Office of San Bernardino Mayor Carey Davis.

Lastly, Mexican Consul for Protection and Legal Affairs Luis Medina, talked about the importance of programs like the Dreamers Center to help cross-border relations and insure that Mexicans living in the United States are treated lawfully and with basic human rights.

After the speeches, Mr. Conley introduced the staff who will be working with the DRC and invited the audience to help themselves to light refreshments and a tour of the center. He also noted that on Friday, April 17th, the college is hosting a conference, "SBVC Dreamers, Journey to Educational Success," from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. in the campus Auditorium. This event is for students attending current SBVC feeder high schools and will give them information about their expanded education options.

For more information, contact Greg Zerovnik at 909-384-8978.

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PHOTOS: (next page)



Dr. Enrique Murillo addresses the audience.



AB 540 student Isabel Rodriguez talks about her college-going experience.



It was standing room only for the Grand Opening of San Bernardino Valley College's Dreamers Resource Center.



From left: Sylvia Juarez, Professional Expert, Dreamers & Guardian Scholars; Dr. Craig Luke, Counselor; Oscar Rodriguez, Senior Student Services Technician; Nivard Somers, Heather Johnson and Andrea Hecht, Adjunct Counselors; and Johnny J. Conley, Interim Director of First Year Experience