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Alejandra Ramirez

Cal State San Bernardino's Palm Desert Campus names 2023 outstanding graduate

PALM DESERT, Calif. - Cal State San Bernardino's Palm Desert Campus has named Alejandra Ramirez as its Outstanding Undergraduate Student for 2023.

Ramirez, who lives in Cathedral City and is a graduate of Rancho Mirage High School, will receive a bachelor of science degree in kinesiology, with a concentration in exercise science, at this year's CSUSB College of Natural Sciences Commencement ceremony, taking place on Saturday, May 20, at the Toyota Arena in Ontario.

"I am incredibly proud of all the risks I took as an undergraduate," said Ramirez. "Receiving the PDC Outstanding Undergraduate Award enabled me to really recognize all that I have accomplished."

Ramirez's long-term goal is to become a pediatric physical therapist. After graduation, she plans on taking a gap year to complete courses that are required to apply to a doctoral program in physical therapy as well as continue her engagement in the research study she is currently

working on about eye gaze behavior in children with high functioning autism spectrum disorder. During this time, she will also be working at Children's Physical Therapy and Wellness in La Quinta as a rehab aide to get more experience in her field.

Ramirez says that she chose to major in kinesiology because she has always been interested in learning about the human body.

"I love to learn about ways to take care of your body through exercise and proper nutrition," she said. "I have always been physically active and encourage others to improve their health through engagement in healthy choices and physical activity. I find it fascinating to learn about human movement and feel that improving movement patterns that may be weak is important in having an optimal lifestyle."

The person she says inspired her most during her journey is her mother, Lorena Ramirez.

"The role my mom takes on is so incredible and I admire her flexibility and adaptability to everything that comes around in her life," said Ramirez. "My mom is very passionate about the things she enjoys doing and commits to her goals. I find this amazing. She does not let anything bring her down. She took the opportunity to get out of her comfort zone recently and joined a group fitness gym with me and I am very proud of her for doing that. She is amazing!"

Ramirez's mentor at the CSUSB Palm Desert Campus is kinesiology associate professor Sarah Dunn.

"Dr. Dunn has seen me grow as a student and as an individual here in the community," she said. "I truly appreciate Dr. Dunn for showing me the importance of getting out of my comfort zone. She has helped me develop into the person I am today and I am very grateful for the advice, guidance, support and encouragement she has given me throughout my two years at CSUSB."

Dunn, who has worked closely with Ramirez for the past two years, says that Ramirez's values are what distinguish her as an exemplary student and leader.

"Alejandra is always highly prepared, articulate and consistently has a pleasant demeanor – shown through her politeness and respect for others," said Dunn. "She has demonstrated in several ways that she is committed to becoming an allied health professional and would like to dedicate her life to supporting others through physical therapy. Last fall I asked her if she would be interested in taking on the unique inaugural role as the PDC Coyote Research Ambassador and she happily accepted. She has already demonstrated excellence in supporting her peers as a Coyote Research Ambassador and has visited various PDC classes to talk with students about attending conferences and engaging in research."

Ramirez is an active volunteer in the community. She has volunteered both on campus with the Kinesiology Student Association (KSA) and off campus with Casa Colina Children's Services Center, Vibra Health, and Children's Physical Therapy and Wellness.

Ramirez says that at CSUSB, she learned the importance of developing relationships and building connections with individuals who are interested in the same or similar career paths that she is.

“I was able to grasp the importance of taking risks and growing as an individual who is working toward their career goals,” she said. “Everything I learned and experienced at CSUSB I will be taking with me as I undergo more experiences and continue my education. I will not be afraid of taking on new challenges because I now know that I am capable of more than just the minimum.”

About PDC: The CSUSB Palm Desert Campus offers bachelor’s and master’s degrees, a doctorate in educational leadership, teaching credentials and certificates. Serving more than 2,300 students, it is the Coachella Valley’s four-year public university and plays a vital role in educating and training the region’s growing population.

For more information about the CSUSB Palm Desert Campus, contact Mike Singer in the Office of Strategic Communication at msinger@csusb.edu or (760) 341-2883, ext. 78107, or visit the PDC website at www.csusb.edu/pdc.