



**Board of Trustees
Transforming Lives
Nominations**

**October 15, 2018
1:30 p.m.**

ATEC
Hardin Community Room

Community College District No. 18
7662 Chanute Street NE
Moses Lake WA 98837

Transforming Lives 2019 Nomination Criteria

Description

The ACT Transforming Lives Awards recognize current or former students whose lives have been transformed by attending a Washington state community or technical college. The ACT Awards Committee will select five keynote speakers from the nominations submitted by the Washington community and technical colleges.

All nominees will be invited to attend, at ACT's expense, the ACT Legislative Contact Conference (January 21, 2019, at the RL Hotel in Olympia), where they will be honored during the Transforming Lives Awards Dinner. Award winners will be the keynote speakers, and each recipient will receive a \$500 cash award from ACT.

Every nominee will have his or her story and picture included in an awards booklet that will be shared with legislators, the higher education community, and posted on the ACT website.

Awards criteria

Nominations must come from the student's board of trustees, based on the following criteria:

- The nominee may be:
 - a current or former Washington community or technical college student (**within 3 years of completing a degree, certificate or transfer**)
 - Or a current student who is making significant progress toward completing a degree or certificate that is helping him or her prepare for success in his or her future endeavors.
- The nominee must share in written format (**maximum 600 words**) about overcoming barriers to achieve higher education goals and how the education and support received at his/her community or technical college was life transforming. **The following questions must be answered in order for the nomination to be eligible for consideration:**
 - ✓ **What compelled you to attend a community or technical college? And most importantly was there an individual(s) or program at the college you feel contributed to your success? What was it about that individual(s) or program that made the difference in transforming your life? Please explain.**
 - ✓ **Were there any barriers or obstacles that originally prevented you from attending a community or technical college?**
 - **If so, please identify those barriers or obstacles and tell us what you did to overcome those barriers or obstacles?**
 - ✓ **What is next for you and what are your goals for your future?**
 - ✓ **If you could share one piece of advice for other students or for those who are unsure about their ability to attend a community or technical college, what would that be?**

Each college may develop its own process for soliciting and selecting nominations. One student from each college may be nominated by the local board of trustees. Multi-campus districts provide one nominate from each college in the district.

Nominations must include the completed nomination form, the student's statement, a letter of support from the board of trustees outlining why the student's story was selected, and a head and shoulder photograph (300 DPI or higher) of the student. Materials must be sent electronically. The student's statement (600 word maximum) must be in a Word document.

Deadlines:

*Nominations must be received by ACT by **Friday, November 2, 2018***

ATTN: Linda Graham lgraham@sbctc.edu

****Previous nominations submitted within the last 3 years are eligible to be resubmitted and reconsidered**
(Students previously chosen as ACT's keynote speakers are not eligible)**

Awardees will be notified in early December.

***** Please note: all student stories and pictures will be published in the Transforming Lives Booklet.
The booklet is widely distributed to Legislators, CTC Stakeholders and the Public. *****

Big Bend Community College
Transforming Lives Award Nominees
Scoring Matrix

Nominee	Barriers	Accomplishments	Goals	Total
Erika Armengol				
Miguel Cruz-Santiago				
Agustina Gutierrez				
Jim Leland				
Yesenia Marquina				

Transforming Lives 2019 Nomination Form

College: Big Bend Community College

Nominee's Name: Erika Armengol

The nominee is a Current | Former - Year Graduated 2016
Washington community or technical college student.

Nominee's contact information:

Address: 16717 Alderwood Mall Pkwy H407

Lynnwood, WA 98037

Email: armengol182@gmail.com

Phone: (H): _____ | (W): _____ | (CELL): (509) 366-6091

PLEASE PROVIDE A MINIMUM OF ONE PHONE NUMBER.

Requirements:

- The nominee's complete statement with a **maximum of 600 words** or less that includes responses to criteria questions.
- A letter of support written by the board is included.
- A head and shoulder photograph (300 DPI or higher) of the nominee is included.
Photographs should be limited to a plain, light background.
- The college's Transforming Lives liaison will work with the president or chancellor's executive assistant (or designee) to register the college's awardee and guest(s) for the awards dinner.
- Nominee has been notified his or her statement and picture will be published in the Transforming Lives Booklet and the ACT website and shared with Legislators, CTC Stakeholders and the Public.

Will the nominee attend the 1/21/2019 dinner? *The five awardees selected as keynote speakers are expected to attend.*

Yes No Unknown

Nomination Deadline: November 2, 2018

The Washington State Association of College Trustees does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, disability, honorably-discharged veteran or military status, sexual orientation, or age in the administration of its programs and activities.

My name is Erika Armengol and I'm a 20 year old Mexican-American. I was born and raised in a rural community named Royal City along with my three siblings. My parents both work in agriculture, my mother is a seasonal field and orchard worker and my father is a foreman at McDougal & Sons Orchards. I too have worked in the orchards and at a fruit factory to help my family. Even though my family has faced obstacles like my father getting stabbed and my older sister getting pregnant in high school, we've gotten through it all by supporting each other.

I've always tried my best in school, in part, because my parents recognized the value of an education. Neither one of them earned a proper education and struggled working in the fields. They've sacrificed so much for me and my siblings that the only way I could think of paying them back is by fulfilling their dreams of having their children attend college. Even though my older sister became a teen mom it didn't stop her from graduating from high school and earning a teaching degree from Central Washington University.

In high school I was presented with the opportunity to participate in Running Start at Big Bend Community College and was guided through this process by its TRiO Upward Bound program. I received substantial help and support through TRiO Upward Bound since my freshman year of high school. Upward Bound gave me the support and guidance both my sister and I needed to make our dreams of attending college a reality. After attending TRiO's summer academy at Big Bend, I gained the confidence to take college classes while in high school. TRiO allowed me to explore different colleges throughout the region, provided assistance with applications for college, financial aid and scholarships, and helped me find many other support systems. It's without question that without TRiO Upward Bound at Big Bend, I wouldn't be where I am today as all my academic success started with support I received from the program.

However, before I started college, like many other students, I had many insecurities on whether I was good enough. I was afraid of being out of my comfort zone-financially, emotionally, and physically. I also wasn't sure how I was going to afford traveling from Royal City to BBCC every day. However, I came to find that college was very beneficial for many reasons. College helped me forge a network of people that served as lifetime resources-career and personal alike. If you knew me before I began college, I was shy and timid and wouldn't always voice my opinion. BBCC became a place where I grew up and matured. I learned how to ask questions and advocate for myself. I was encouraged to join clubs on BBCC's campus so I could gain a full college experience and did so by participating in M.E.Ch.A and Phi Theta Kappa for the two years.

I am currently attending the University of Washington Bothell where I am scheduled to graduate next June with a Bachelor's degree in Health and Educational Studies. My future goal is to find a job where both my degrees can be utilized and where I can promote health to agricultural workers and advise them about diseases and insurance resources. I would especially love to help new immigrants learn about the U.S. health policies as well as direct them to resources.

For any student unsure about attending college, I would advise them to challenge themselves because you never really know what you can accomplish, until you do.



Big Bend

COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Transforming lives through excellence in teaching & learning

TRIO UPWARD BOUND

October 1, 2018

To Whom It May Concern:

It is my pleasure to nominate Erika Armengol for a 2019 Transforming Lives Award. I worked with Erika throughout high school as her academic advisor in the TRiO Upward Bound program at Big Bend Community College (BBCC). TRiO Upward Bound is a federally funded college readiness program that provides academic support, college preparation, career awareness, and other support services to low-income and/or potential first-generation college students.

Erika grew up in Royal City, WA but never let living in a rural town become a disadvantage in preparing for college. Instead, she joined TRiO, participated in a healthcare internship, and was an active volunteer in the community. She spent several years sorting cherries and working in the apple orchards to help her family and to pay for transportation costs while attending BBCC as a Running Start student.

Erika was a hard working student and graduated with a high school diploma and an Associate of Arts & Science degree from BBCC in June 2016. She is continuing her undergraduate studies at the University of Washington Bothell campus where she is double majoring in educational and health studies. In the future, she would like to work in healthcare administration and/or public health and target vulnerable populations like agricultural workers and immigrants.

For over a year, she's gained experience as a work-study student with the Disability Resources Office at the UW Bothell campus. She also devotes her time as a volunteer mentor at Voyager Middle School in Everett, WA where she educates 7th graders about college applications, resumes, financial aid and scholarships, and goal setting. Erika enjoyed her experience as a member of the M.E.Ch.A club at BBCC and has continued to participate in a similar club called Latinx Student Union. More and more, she is finding her self-confidence, passion, and voice and it all started here at Big Bend Community College.

This past March, she participated in a week-long study abroad program in Rome, Italy called, "Exploring an American Sense of Place, Identity and Citizenship in Rome". She was nervous and apprehensive about traveling internationally without family but decided to take advantage of the opportunity. She deeply enjoyed the experience and the immersion in the study of art, architecture, topography, and archeology while exploring issues around cultural difference and similarities.

Erika has a passion for learning and helping people. This summer, she wanted to give back to TRiO Upward Bound by serving as a summer academy resident advisor. She was a great role model and mentor to high school students by sharing her personal story and encouraging them to step out of their comfort zones and to establish goals.

This student has truly transformed before my eyes. When she first began participating in TRiO Upward Bound she lacked self-confidence and didn't talk very much. After participating in summer academy, I began to notice a positive shift in her academic confidence and personal demeanor and it only continues to grow through her diverse educational, work, and leadership experiences.

Thank you for taking the time to learn about Erika Armengol and how Big Bend has a role in transforming her into the confident young lady she is today.

If you would like more information about this candidate, please contact me at (509) 793-2014 or via email at anitad@bigbend.edu.

Sincerely,

Anita De Leon, MSW
TRiO Upward Bound Director

Transforming Lives 2019 Nomination Form

College: Big Bend Community College

Nominee's Name: Miguel Cruz-Santiago

The nominee is a Current | Former - Year Graduated _____
Washington community or technical college student.

Nominee's contact information:

Address: PO Box 275

Quincy, WA 98848

Email: MCruz37@bigbend.edu

Phone: (H): _____ | (W): _____ | (CELL): 509-433-1438

PLEASE PROVIDE A MINIMUM OF ONE PHONE NUMBER.

Requirements:

- The nominee's complete statement with a **maximum of 600 words** or less that includes responses to criteria questions.
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Will the nominee attend the 1/21/2019 dinner? *The five awardees selected as keynote speakers are expected to attend.*

Yes

No

Unknown

Nomination Deadline: November 2, 2018

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I would like to express my sincere appreciation to Landra Kosa and Jennifer Starr for having nominated me for Transforming Lives recognition. I was born and raised in the southern part of Oaxaca, Mexico, in a little community of indigenous people. I grew up very humble, without many privileges. I moved to the United States at the age of fifteen. I have lived in three different states--New York, Utah, and Washington--doing mostly farm work. Over the past few years, I have been working in apple orchards in Quincy, Washington. Working in the field is pleasant when the weather is good, with the air and the sun's rays hitting my face, but it is a job that requires a lot of physical strength. When it goes well, I can make a decent wage, but it can also be bitter because it is very labor-intensive. Sometimes when I work by piece, I barely earn minimum wage while working twice as hard. There are no holidays, no benefits, and no overtime; the big corporate farming companies just want the job done, and the weather changes constantly from hot to cold to windy to snowy. That is the downside of being a laborer, and it hurts emotionally not to see any mobility.

That feeling changed my life and pushed me to get my high school diploma in 2016 at Big Bend Community College, where I eventually enrolled as a full-time student. More than anything, financial circumstances are what prevented me from attending school sooner. For many years my only dream was to attend school. The reality is that it is hard to go to school when the only person supporting you financially is yourself.

It took me many years to be able to attend school. All this would not have been possible without the help of many wonderful people who are part of this amazing educational institution. Jody Bortz, my GED instructor, motivated me to continue studying at the college. My English and writing were greatly improved by working in the Writing Center. Also, I would not have continued if it was not for the scholarships that are available at BBCC. Also LeAnn Parton and

Jennifer Starr have my heartfelt thanks for the outstanding work they are doing in providing students with life-changing scholarships.

As an avid reader, I came to realize one of the ways to achieve upward mobility is through education. An education has the power to take an individual to the next level. Without education a person will always be the victim. For these reasons, I try to motivate people to take advantage of community college. It is the best first step to unlocking one's full potential.

I am currently majoring in Agriculture at Big Bend Community College. In August of 2019, I will be transferring to Washington State University to pursue a Bachelor's Degree in Field Crop Management (Agronomy), with an emphasis in Organic Agriculture and a minor in Agribusiness. My reason for wanting to study agriculture is that I feel I have enough experience in the labor segment, but I am lacking the educational components.

I want to learn as much as possible about how to help farmers and field workers better understand safety rules and how to create a work environment where there is respect and equality for all people, regardless of their beliefs, color, sexual orientation, or nationality. To achieve these goals, I need more education, which I can receive at Washington State University. I want to be well-rounded and learn as much as I can. With dedication and perseverance, I know this is possible.



Big Bend

COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Transforming lives through excellence in teaching & learning

Agriculture Education

September 26, 2018

Dear Transforming Lives Committee,

Miguel Santiago Cruz started his college career taking adult basic skills courses and completing his GED. This took some time, a period of about four years. As an English Language Learner and earning a living working in agriculture as a laborer, this was not easy. Miguel faced many challenges including long and exhausting hours, a language barrier, and financial constraints. Once, earning his GED he aspired for something more and continued his academic journey, this is when I first met Miguel.

Miguel had been dabbling in the industrial systems department but through his experience realized, his true passion was in agriculture. I still remember Kate in the writing lab informing me she recommended a student to come talk with me and that he was an extraordinary student, boy was she right! I remember sitting down with Miguel for the first time to discuss the new options in the Ag Department. What struck me was that despite Miguel's experience with the unpleasant and backbreaking side of agriculture he had a great passion for the industry and saw the many opportunities that would await him if he pursued a degree. I also picked-up on his zest for learning and recall him telling me that he read an economics textbook "just to learn more about it". At the conclusion of our meeting Miguel decided to pursue an Associate of Applied Science-Transfer degree in agriculture, specifically to continue his education at Washington State University to complete a Field Crop Management degree.

Just like the beginning of his secondary education journey this was no easy task. Miguel went on to conquer the "Big" Chemistry series as well excelling in his agriculture and related courses. Throughout his journey, Miguel has employed and called on the many departments and support services on our campus including the writing center, STEM center, and BBCC Foundation. Because of Miguel's work ethic, persistence, and academic success he has also been the recipient of a number of Big Bend Community College Foundation Scholarships as well as other scholarships to support his incredible academic journey.

Miguel is now in his final quarters of his Big Bend experience and is ready to finish his bachelor's degree at Washington State University. Miguel's success and transformation here at Big Bend has been an incredible and indescribable experience to witness, however the greatest part of his story has been his influence on those around him to transform their lives. You see, along his journey he has encouraged, helped, and inspired many of his friends and relatives that are now pursuing degrees, applying for scholarships, and taking advanced courses due to his influence. Miguel is not only transforming his life but those around him as well.

I whole-heartedly recommend Miguel for the transforming lives award.

Sincerely,

Landra Kosa
Agriculture Education Coordinator/Instructor

Transforming Lives 2019 Nomination Form

College: Big Bend Community College

Nominee's Name: Agustina Gutierrez

The nominee is a Current | Former - Year Graduated 2017 with Honors
Washington community or technical college student.

Nominee's contact information:

Address: 111 College Hill St., #24

Cheney, WA 99004

Email: agustinagutierrez07@hotmail.com

Phone: (H): _____ | (W): _____ | (CELL): (509) 793-8185

PLEASE PROVIDE A MINIMUM OF ONE PHONE NUMBER.

Requirements:

- The nominee's complete statement with a **maximum of 600 words** or less that includes responses to criteria questions.
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Will the nominee attend the 1/21/2019 dinner? *The five awardees selected as keynote speakers are expected to attend.*

Yes

No

Unknown

Nomination Deadline: November 2, 2018

The Washington State Association of College Trustees does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, disability, honorably-discharged veteran or military status, sexual orientation, or age in the administration of its programs and activities.

My name is Agustina Gutierrez, I am from Royal City, Washington and I am a graduate of Big Bend Community College (BBCC). I am in my senior year at Eastern Washington University, working toward completion of a Bachelor in Social Work. I applied to BBCC, because I was afraid that many universities would not accept me. I thought my words had no worth and I couldn't shake the idea that others had a better chance of succeeding than I did. There was a lot happening with my family at the time and I was afraid of leaving them and my home, so attending BBCC was a great option. I now realize that attending a community college was the best opportunity I could have received and when I look back at my education, I have no regrets. BBCC provided learning opportunities that I did not have in my previous school setting. I was also able to connect with people and resources that helped me develop a more positive mindset and the self-confidence I needed to continue my education.

One resource that has been valuable to me is TRIO, I participated in this program at my high school and BBCC. I credit much of my success to TRIO and its staff not only did they help, but they also inspired. This program is vital to student success; the support it provides is invaluable. Someday I would love to be part of TRIO to help connect students to the same benefits I had. I am thankful for having Heidi Gephart in my life. She is my adviser, my friend and my person. When I felt lost in my education, or other situations, she was the one I would go to. I would call Heidi "my pusher" because she helped me overcome some of my most challenging insecurities and fears. She encouraged me to do things outside of my comfort zone. Like encouraging me to make a positive difference on campus through the Vikings Dance Club. She also helped address my fear of applying for scholarships. In the past, I had been afraid to apply for scholarships because I thought my writing was not good enough and the application process was intimidating. Heidi helped guide me through the process and it resulted in extra financial assistance to continue my education after BBCC. Having a person or people who believe in your potential and help push you forward has been life changing.

One of the biggest obstacles I have had to overcome is the death of two of my brothers. When I was 10, one of my brothers died in a car accident. The week of my High School graduation, I lost another brother to suicide. These tragedies almost prevented me from coming to school. I didn't want to leave my family, I thought it would be too painful and they would feel like they had lost another child. These losses piled on top of one another filling me with both grief and guilt. I wanted to give up on school and stay near my family, but something inside me wouldn't give up. I knew deep down my brothers would have wanted me to continue with my education and go on to make a positive difference in the world. So I held tight to my dreams of college and I am about to become a Social Worker. If I could share one piece of advice to another student thinking about attending community college it would be; when you feel lost and uncertain, don't be afraid to ask for help and be open to change.



Big Bend
COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Transforming lives through excellence in teaching & learning

September 28, 2018

SBCTC

Washington State ACT
1300 Quince ST. SE, 4TH floor
Olympia, WA 98504-2495

To Whom It May Concern,

I am proud to nominate Agustina Gutierrez for the Transforming Lives Award. I first met Agustina in February of 2015 when she approached me about being an advisor for the student club she was starting at Big Bend Community College. Agustina is a certified Zumba instructor, she saw a need to bring this resource to the BBCC campus and the Viking Dance Fitness Club was born. As the president of this club, Agustina was responsible for scheduling, organizing and running club meetings. As a service to students, faculty and staff on our campus Agustina ran a free one-hour Zumba class one time per week. She also organized a campus wide Breast Cancer Awareness campaign. Agustina spearheaded a multi-club collaboration for Sexual Assault Awareness Month, April 2016. This was a two-week campus wide event that included, outreach, educational displays and activities, workshops, and a free screening of the documentary, The Hunting Ground open to the public.

Agustina is a first generation college student; her family migrated to the United States before she was born. She grew up in the small town of Royal City, where she graduated from high school. Agustina's life has not been free of challenge or adversity and she has had to overcome significant tragedy. What is special about Agustina is that she has not let these experiences shut her down, instead she has learned and grown from them. She is an extremely resilient individual and a very companionate person with a great deal of empathy for others. I have watched her reach out to individuals on campus and make a real and lasting impact on their lives.

Knowing Agustina has been such a pleasure, her kindness and willingness to help others is an inspiration to me. As she nears graduation from the Social Work program at EWU, I am excited to see what the future holds for her. Agustina would be a worthy recipient of the Transforming Lives Award, please feel free to contact me at 509-793-2029, or by email at heidig@bigbend.edu if you have any additional questions.

Sincerely,

Heidi Gephart
Counseling/Advising

Transforming Lives 2019 Nomination Form

College: Big Bend Community College

Nominee's Name: Jim Leland

The nominee is a Current | Former - Year Graduated _____
Washington community or technical college student.

Nominee's contact information:

Address: Street 1612 W Fern Dr

City, State Zip Moses Lake, WA 98837

Email: jim@thelelandfamily.com

Phone: (H): _____ | (W): _____ | (CELL): 509-750-5739

PLEASE PROVIDE A MINIMUM OF ONE PHONE NUMBER.

Requirements:

- The nominee's complete statement with a **maximum of 600 words** or less that includes responses to criteria questions.
- A letter of support written by the board is included.
- A head and shoulder photograph (300 DPI or higher) of the nominee is included.
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Will the nominee attend the 1/21/2019 dinner? *The five awardees selected as keynote speakers are expected to attend.*

Yes No Unknown

Nomination Deadline: November 2, 2018

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Roman philosopher Seneca said that "Luck Is What Happens When Preparation Meets Opportunity". I was introduced to BBCC when a lack of opportunity met a lack of preparation. REC Silicon had one of an ongoing string of RIFs, and I was abruptly and unceremoniously laid off 02 Nov 16. Sitting at WorkSource with my hat in my hands, I needed to decide what was next. I could continue to punch a clock for someone else and accept the risk that had already led to two layoffs in as many years, or I could go back to school and put my destiny back into my own hands.

Unmanned Systems has fundamentally and irrevocably altered the way in which I view our world and how I perceive the future of industry and education. Along that path, there have been so many people instrumental in making that change possible – they are the pinnacle of professionalism and unequivocally deserve whatever recognition can be bestowed upon them, as their commitment to service and passion for excellence is improving lives and our communities on many levels.

Alicia Wallace, though now outside the college, was pivotal in getting me going with financial aid when the ink was not yet dry on my RIF paperwork, the wheels of government spun slowly and no TAA funding existed yet. Rafael Villalobos has tirelessly worked and reworked my training plan to fit a two-year program into a window of a year and a half because we had to wait for accreditation. The instructors all along the way have represented what all students should hope for in educators – knowledgeable, passionate, flexible, patient. Kristen McCrae, Tabatha DeLong, Andrea Elliott, Barbara Whitney, Brinn Harberts, Gary Baker, Byron Will-Noel, Drs. Patrick Ford and Patrick Barton, and many others – they have all worked with my extraordinarily complex needs and schedules, demonstrating unwavering commitment to me as a student and their selfless service as educators.

I had considered returning to school on several occasions in the past, but I was faced with a lack of time and money – I either had too much of one and not enough of the other and frequently too little of both. My life as a working adult, sole provider, husband, and father, did not lend itself to going back. In that sense, being laid off, especially from REC, created a unique crossroads. The staff and faculty of BBCC have guided me at every step to identify and seize the magnificent potential in that life-changing moment.

I'm coming up on the 2-year anniversary of the RIF. I couldn't have predicted the overwhelming changes that have happened in the interim. The relationships I've formed, the experiences I've had, the potential that exists – I wouldn't have believed it possible, and all in so short a time. Because of our time at BBCC, my wife and I have started 360 Aviation. We have had the opportunity to foster relationships with realtors, agencies at several levels, and businesses across the state; worked on national precision agriculture projects; prototyped parts for businesses; and are developing proprietary solutions for commercial needs. We're committed to advancing unmanned systems in industry.

To those potential students out there – it's a rare case indeed to find a person as passionate and committed to your future as you are, who believes in you, perhaps more than you do. BBCC is **full** of those people. The training and resources exist to make any dream you have a reality; the only thing missing is you. Take that courageous step into going back to school – you can build a better future for yourself and your family.



Big Bend
COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Transforming lives through excellence in teaching & learning

September 25, 2018

RE: Transforming Lives Award

Dear Trustees,

Jim Leland is a non-traditional student who works hard for himself and others. After experiencing a setback and unemployment, Mr. Leland decided to create a different future for himself and his family. While attending Big Bend Community College, he is focused and always available to help fellow students, especially veterans. As a veteran himself, Mr. Leland understands the challenges transitioning to civilian life can bring.

Mr. Leland also works at BBCC as the Vet Corps Navigator. He has an open door to fellow veterans and led a school supply drive for veterans and their dependents. He is also presently supporting a food drive for veterans and hopes to establish a regional Veteran Resource Center to support the desperately needy and underserved of Grant County and the Columbia Basin.

Mr. Leland assists veterans and students by using his experiences to support his interactions with them. I have witnessed his interactions with others and he is seen as a leader and a listener who cares. He has worked alongside other staff and faculty to host events such as the Raspberry Jam (a technology event focusing on the Raspberry Pi microcomputer) and the recent Search and Rescue summer camp to increase BBCC's outreach and exposure. He is a fervent believer in the power of education and strives to bring the opportunities that Big Bend has provided him to others.

Mr. Leland is a great example of someone who has worked hard and is leveraging education to make changes in his own life and the community around him. In his essay he gives credit to several BBCC staff; however, he deserves the credit for taking charge and risking a new direction which has paid off considerably for him and his family.

I recommend Mr. Leland for the Transforming Lives Award. He has used his education to transform his life from punching a time clock to making a real difference in his community.

Sincerely,


Melinda Dourte

Transforming Lives 2019 Nomination Form

College: Big Bend Community College

Nominee's Name: Yesenia Marquina

The nominee is a Current | Former - Year Graduated _____
Washington community or technical college student.

Nominee's contact information:

Address: 222 E 9th Ave Apt 4303
Moses Lake, WA 98837

Email: enia.marq@gmail.com / ymarquina68@bigbend.edu

Phone: (H): 509-855-8823 | (W): _____ | (CELL): _____

PLEASE PROVIDE A MINIMUM OF ONE PHONE NUMBER.

Requirements:

- The nominee's complete statement with a **maximum of 600 words** or less that includes responses to criteria questions.
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Nomination Deadline: November 2, 2018

The Washington State Association of College Trustees does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, disability, honorably-discharged veteran or military status, sexual orientation, or age in the administration of its programs and activities.

What compelled me to attend Big Bend Community College in Moses Lake, Washington, was the mere availability and opportunity it was. I was extremely fortunate that BBCC offered evening classes that lined up with my work hours and that I could receive FASFA grants to afford going to school full-time. Nonetheless, I was also at a point in my life where I was craving to better myself, and in turn, better provide for my family. Big Bend Community College provided me the opportunity and support that would lead me into a better career.

The new Data Center Program I enrolled in offered me an introduction to the world of information technology. BBCC was more beneficial than just the courses and teachers I learned from, it was all about the connections I made and the skills I acquired from managing so many things in my life at once – this is what truly challenged me to grow. My advisor for this new program, Tom Willingham, made sure that students associated with contacts working within the industry of data centers in Quincy, Washington. Attending job shadows and facility tours, I became more aware of the work environment, and that allowed me to decide whether it was something I could do. Most importantly, I obtained a better understanding of who I was and where I envisioned this opportunity to take me. Without the goal planning and human relations aspect of this program, I would not have had the connections to obtain an interview or the skills to more confidently present myself – skills that literally changed my life.

The biggest barrier was time itself. Holding a full-time job, attending school full-time, and being a mother and a wife would not be easy. My husband became a stay-at-home dad, but still the toughest challenge to attending college was sacrificing so much time without him and my two little boys. As a result, this experience taught me the value of time and the importance of my family. To not misuse my time, I had to learn to set schedules and to let go of things out of my control because it was necessary. I prevailed because I learned to embrace life as it was, even through the struggles I reminded myself to stay grateful for the opportunity. My family and I moved to Moses Lake to cut down on my commute to school and work. I was also battling my own social anxiety and my own doubts of whether all this work would lead me to some kind of success. I continually pushed myself to attend classes and stay focused on my school work. All these barriers were affecting my life every day but I was fortunate to have a very supportive and forgiving family to help me through it.

I have now begun my career as an Operations Center Technician for a large privately-owned data center company with a salary increase of over 110 percent. Every day is humbling because every day I realize how much I have yet of to learn. My goals for the future include continuing to learn and develop skills that will further help me advance in my career, in whatever form that may come in. I also intend to continue to take at least one class per quarter at BBCC.

For anyone who is unsure about their ability to attend a community or technical college, I would advise them to first find the resources available in their area and to not be afraid to take those opportunities and use them to their advantage. Also, to make SMART goals and aspire to reach them even through the given adversities.



Big Bend

COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Transforming lives through excellence in teaching & learning

Computer Science

August 28, 2018

RE: YESENIA MARQUINA NOMINATION FOR TRANSFORMING LIVES AWARD

Dear Scholarship Committee:

I have known Yesenia Marquina as a student in Computer Science since the beginning of Fall Quarter 2017. She has done a well above average job in all of her classes with a 3.6 average. She is determined to succeed and proves it regularly by proactively seeking feedback and using that feedback to change or improve her skills.

To be successful, a student must be self-motivated, willing to work hard, and use critical thinking skills. Yesenia embodies all three. She has been a full-time student, a full-time worker, and a full-time parent throughout the previous school year. Her ability to listen and take constructive criticism has made her an ideal candidate to work with. This has also given her a chance to land a great job with one of the areas data centers as an Operations Center Technician. Her direct supervisor has given her accolades in our conversations about her progress.

Yesenia has proven that she has what it takes to overcome barriers and stay on track to complete her goals. Although somewhat quiet and reserved, I see her as a very strong, capable, and confident person who realizes that she can create a much better future for herself and her family.

Yesenia does a good job in team environments and an outstanding job of taking responsibility for her schedule and obligations. I know that she has taken this opportunity seriously and have complete confidence that she will be very successful in life. I gladly recommend Yesenia Marquina for the Transforming Lives Award.

Thank you,

Tom Willingham
Business Information Management
509.793.2191