



**BRIGHTSTAR**  
SCHOOLS

# ALUMNI NEWS

ALUMNI SUPPORT & COLLEGE SUCCESS PROGRAM

BY GENOVEVA CORTES (310) 948-1733 GCORTES@BRIGHTSTARSCHOOLS.ORG

## BSSCA CLASS OF 2015-2016

### CHRYS CARDOSO

**BSSCA ALUMNUS 2016**  
**CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, NORTHRIDGE, ALUMNUS 2020**  
**MAJORS: CHILD & ADOLESCENT DEVELOPMENT AND PSYCHOLOGY**



Chrys took advantage of all the support available from teachers and his schools which made a difference in his academic trajectory. Now that he has from CSUN, he is looking forward to continuing his career working with children. Before the coronavirus stuck, he was working at an afterschool program as a Manager. "I enjoy working with kids (and) I miss my students." He isn't sure on an exact career but is open to anything involving children such as a high school counselor. Chrys had a good experience in college and shared that "it wasn't as hard as people say, just do your work."

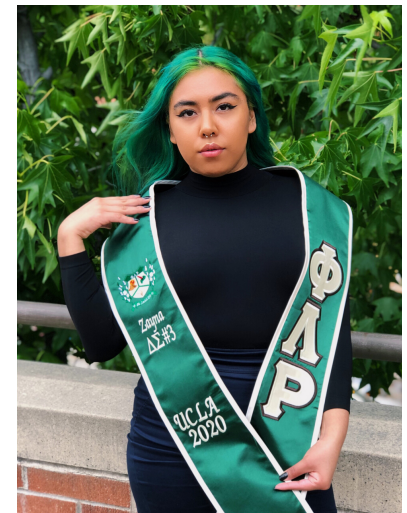
Since CSUN is a large campus, "you meet new people every day which forces you to be more social. There are always things to do on campus." Although he came to CSUN with his network of BSSCA friends, he made new ones in his Statistics class who encouraged him to "rush" their fraternity Zeta Beta Tau (ZBT) during his 2nd semester of Freshman year. Joining ZBT was a great fit for him and although "it was a little expensive, it never took too much time from school. It was a good balance between my academics and social life."

During his 4 years of college, Chrys always worked part time while maintaining good grades. He recommends incoming Freshman to "get your money's worth. Try to make the most out of college because it's only 4 years and it goes by pretty fast. There were a few opportunities where I wish I could have done things but I didn't."

### KARLA P. BALBINO

**BSSCA ALUMNA 2016**  
**UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, LOS ANGELES**  
**MAJOR: GEOGRAPHY & ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES**  
**MINOR: CHICANA & CHICANO STUDIES**

As a first generation college student of color, Karla's experience at UCLA has been full of challenges. However those challenges are what have shaped her into the resilient individual she is today. Her involvement in Phi Lambda Rho Sorority, Inc. and MEChA de UCLA helped her thrive at such a large university. Both of these organizations provided a support system for her as well as opportunities in taking on leadership positions. During her senior year, she conducted her own research through the Arts Initiative Program under the Advancement Academic Program. Once she graduates, Karla plans to enter the work force before applying to graduate school for her Master's degree.



Her advice to incoming UCLA Freshman or Junior Transfer students is, "challenge yourself to explore different communities so that you don't limit yourself to one department or group of friends. Think outside the box and push boundaries whenever it is within your capacities. Your unique identity has so much to contribute in higher education, let your voice be heard."

# BSSCA CLASS OF 2017-2020

BY GRACIELA APARICIO (818) 398-2358 GAPARICIO@BRIGHTSTARSCHOOLS.ORG

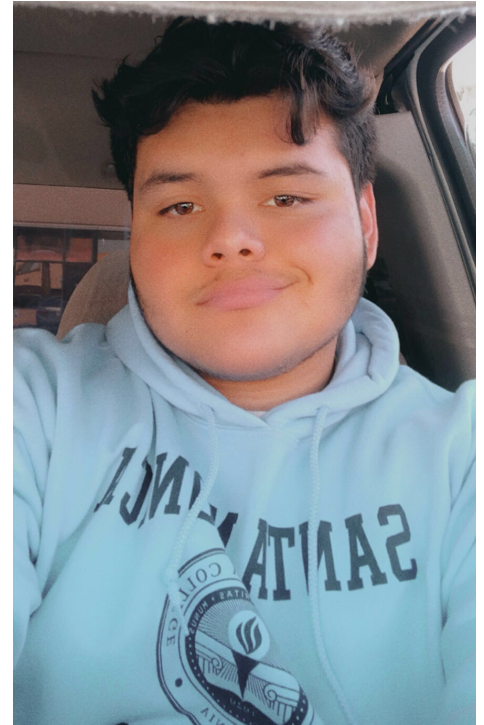
**FRANCISCO RENDON** BSSCA ALUMNUS 2019  
 SANTA MONICA COLLEGE  
 MAJOR: COMMUNICATION

Francisco is starting his second year at SMC and is excelling in everything he does. He is on track to transfer in 2-years, something many community college students struggle with. Francisco advocates for himself and uses his Alumni Support Coordinator to meet his academic goals, whether it's to request a new Education Plan for his major or reviewing the best classes for his schedule. He always seeks out support and the results are showing.

"Everyone's college experience is going to be different. Mine surprisingly has been pretty chill. It is a different vibe compared to high school because there are people from different walks of life and people who are older, which goes to show that it is never too late to start school if now is not the right time."

"Ms. Aparicio, who is guiding me through this new environment suggested political science as a possible major and I thought it was right for me, but I was wrong on so many levels. While I was in my political science classes, I kept thinking to myself this is not for me, so I decided to switch majors to Communication Studies." For this major, he can choose careers in a variety of fields: media, journalism, television, film, public relations, human resources, business, health, and lots more.

On his decision to attend SMC, community college "gave me a second chance when it comes to applying to UCs and other schools that I would not have been able to attend with my high school GPA." His advice for new Alumni is to "not settle for less because at the end of the day it is your life."



**URIEL REYES** BSSCA ALUMNUS 2019  
 UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, DAVIS  
 MAJOR: DESIGN



URIEL TOP ROW FIRST FROM THE RIGHT

Uriel Reyes has had an amazing first year at UC Davis and he owes a lot of his success to the community he has formed there.

Uriel shares his first year journey: My college experience turned out to be much different than I initially expected. I had gotten used to being at a small school (BSSCA) with teachers and staff that I had built relationships with and friends that I have been with since 5th grade. I was scared about potentially failing and not being good enough to attend UC Davis. Attending UC Davis would mean leaving home and starting fresh 400 miles away from my friends and family.

I owe a huge part of my success in college to STEP; a summer program UC Davis offered to incoming freshmen to help with their transition into college. In STEP I was able to meet my group of friends that keep me in check and got used to college life in Davis. I was able to build relationships with peer mentors and EOP staff to make my transition easier. With their help and my determination to succeed, I was able to end the year with a 3.5 GPA. I definitely struggled a little in Fall Quarter, but I was able to pick it up by Winter and Spring Quarter.

I am a Design major emphasizing in Fashion Design. With the skills that I learn I want to start my own clothing business or design clothes for people and work my way up to maybe designing for celebrities. At first I didn't even know UC Davis had a Design major. But when I found out they did, I knew that that is what I wanted to do. My advice would be to go into college with an open mind. Don't be afraid to change majors, just know that you'll end up going to the college or university you are meant to be going to."



## RKHS CLASS OF 2020

BY STEPHANIE CALDERON (310)876-4368 SCALDERON@BRIGHTSTARSCHOOLS.ORG

### SION YU- RKHS ALUMNUS 2020

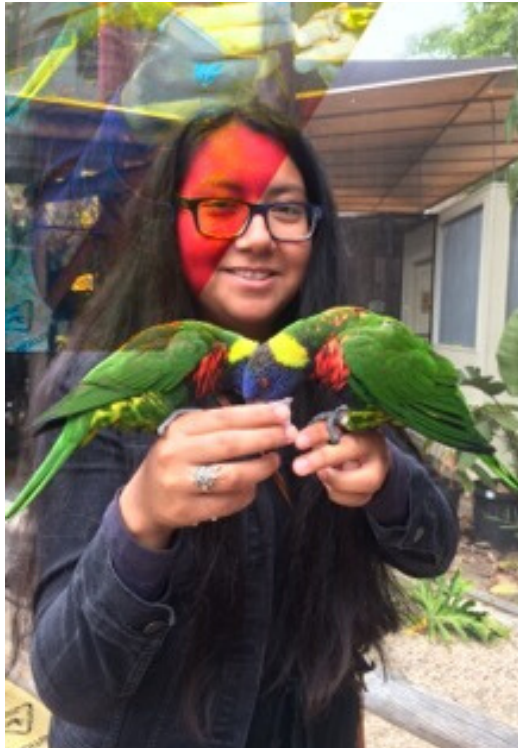
**CAL STATE UNIVERSITY, DOMINGUEZ HILLS - EXPECTED GRAD DATE 2024**  
**MAJOR: BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION**

Sion is part of the very first graduating class at Rise Kohyang High School. From a young age he enjoyed golf, and had the support of the staff and coaches at RKHS to pursue the sport competitively. The Athletic Director of RKHS says that he believed in Sion's talent and helped him navigate the recruitment process to play golf in college. After preparing for the recruitment process, and sending in videos to multiple school, Sion got a few offers to play golf in college-- both in state and out of state. Ultimately, Sion decided to attend CSU, Dominguez Hill this fall as the very first student from RKHS to earn a scholarship for NCAA sports. CSUDH has a Division II NCAA Golf Team which he is proud to be joining.



### LITZY MARTINEZ - RKHS ALUMNA 2020

**CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, NORTHRIDGE, EXPECTED GRAD DATE 2024**  
**MAJOR: JOURNALISM**



Litzy is the first in her family to attend college. Both of her parents are immigrants from Mexico. Her motivations for attending college are to make her entire family proud. She attended Bright Star Schools since 6th grade starting with at RKMS, and then transitioned to RKHS. Her most memorable experiences have been the end of year LEL's where she got to learn more about her teachers and mentors as people outside the classroom. She credits those experiences to fueling her desire to go to college. She is the eldest of four siblings and wants to be a great role model for her younger brothers and sister. She is really excited about the Journalism program at CSUN and hopes to study abroad in Italy one day. She aspires to become a writer and cover international news through her work. Her ultimate goal is to seek happiness in life no matter where her journey takes her.

# BRIGHT STAR SCHOOLS ALUMNI SUPPORT & COLLEGE SUCCESS TEAM

All Bright Star Schools Alumni and Alumnae, high school graduates, will be supported in graduating from college for up to 6 years. Our goal is for our Alumni to earn a Bachelor's, Associate's, Career Technical Education degree, or workforce development certificate from an accredited college or program. If you are a BSS Alumni from the class of 2014-2020, we will be there to help you navigate, thrive, and succeed in graduating from higher education. If you have paused your education or want to get started in a program tailored to your goals and circumstances, please reach out to us so we can help you before your membership in the program expires.

## KYLE PETRIE

BA, BOWDOIN COLLEGE

VAHS ASCS COORDINATOR  
SUPPORTING CLASS OF 2017 - 2020  
KPETRIE@BRIGHTSTARSCHOOLS.ORG

Kyle Petrie has worked in urban public education for over 12 years. He initially entered the field as a high school history teacher in the Bronx, NY, as part of Teach For America. After his time in New York, Kyle spent seven years as an AP teacher, advisor, coach, and Director of Alumni Support at Gary Comer College Prep on Chicago's south side.



As the ASCS Coordinator at Valor Academy High School, Kyle's primary responsibilities revolve around ensuring that all Valor alumni receive adequate support with the financial, academic, and social-emotional concerns that they face while pursuing higher education. Kyle is primarily motivated by the belief that higher education is the foundation that will allow our students to be successful and happy in both their careers and personal lives.

## GRACIELA APARICIO

BA, UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, SANTA BARBARA  
MS. CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, NORTHRIDGE

BSSCA ASCS COORDINATOR  
SUPPORTING CLASS OF 2017 - 2020  
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Graciela Aparicio has been working with high school students of color since 2013. In her undergraduate career, she organized conferences for undocumented high school students in Ventura County. After graduating from UCSB in 2015, she started her career in education working in numerous high schools in the San Fernando Valley in various roles such as math tutor, college counselor, academic counselor, and academic case manager.



In 2018, she completed her Master's of Science in Counseling and P.P.S Credential at CSUN. Graciela understands the necessity of our students of color to get into higher education and meet their educational and/or career goals. She's excited to work with the Bright Star Secondary Charter School alumni and provide the support they need to navigate post-secondary education.

## STEPHANIE CALDERON

BA, UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, LOS ANGELES  
M.ED. CSU, LONG BEACH COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

RKHS ASCS COORDINATOR  
SUPPORTING CLASS OF 2020  
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Stephanie Calderon has over 6 years of experience supporting students and their families in college access and success programs. She currently serves as the Alumni Support and College Success Coordinator for Rise Kohyang High School. Her goal is to support all RKHS Alumni with their post-secondary plans to ensure they accomplish their goals and aspirations for the future.



Stephanie is a first-generation college graduate. She obtained her bachelors in 2014 from UCLA in Women Studies. Upon graduating college she decided she wanted to help facilitate the process for applying and earning a degree for youth in her community of Los Angeles.

## GENOVEVA CORTES

BA, UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, LOS ANGELES  
M.ED. HARVARD GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

ASCS DIRECTOR  
SUPPORTING BSSCA CLASS OF 2015 - 2016  
GCORTES@BRIGHTSTARSCHOOLS.ORG

Genoveva Garibay Cortes has over two decades of experience working as an elementary and middle school teacher, K-12 and college administrator, and program coordinator. She was Bright Star Schools' founding math teacher for Stella Middle Charter Academy in 2003, and currently serves as the Director of the Alumni Support and College Success (ASCS) Program for the organization.



Geno developed and launched Bright Star's ASCS Program to support the organization's alumni to persist in and graduate from higher education. ASCS tracks, supports, and coaches Bright Star Schools' alumni to get to and through higher education, with a goal of 60% of Bright Star Schools alumni graduating with a bachelor's or associate's degree, vocational certificate, or from a workplace development program within six years of high school graduation.