

CEO Update

March is one of the most anticipated times of the year at BLCI. After years of hard work and dedication, our Seniors are presented with their college acceptance letters. Gone are the days of type written essays and paper envelopes that date my time at UCSD and SDSU, but the feeling of excitement remains the same.

We are proud of our Seniors and are sharing their college acceptances on our socials over the next month. Take a few moments to send them some words of encouragement as they take advantage of this earned opportunity and all that education has to offer.



CEO Sara Boquin graduating with her masters degree from San Diego State University

As our high school seniors prepare to become first year undergrads, our juniors are about to embark on a milestone of their own – college visits. These annual campus visits allow students to capture what student life is like and develop a sense of what kind of school they can envision in their future. They can see the buildings, get a sense of the classrooms, learn about the quirky superstitions, see other students who look like them, and get a taste of campus life. Funded with the help of philanthropic support, the trips are critical to help the students narrow down their selection and give a better sense of what their college experience will be like. If you haven't done so already, [purchase your ticket](#) and join us at Opportunity for Impact and help fund critical programs like these.

Our students will be taking over our social media accounts and documenting their week-long trip in the beginning of April. Be sure to check in and see the trip in action.

Thank you for your support and for making experiences like this possible.

Sara Boquin

Chief Executive Officer, BLCI

Program Spotlight - College Success Program

BLCI promotes a college-going culture in which college becomes an expectation for our students. Programs begin in the 3rd grade to establish a solid academic foundation that ensures a successful transition to college. 100% of students who graduate from BLCI's College Success Program enroll in college – but our work doesn't end there. BLCI prepares underserved students to be the first in their families not just to attend, but to *graduate* college.

- The national average for college completion is 62%, regardless of background.
- For college students in California, the average is even less at 55%.
- For 1st generation college students, the rate drops down to 34%.
- If you are a 1st generation and qualify as low-income student like that of BLCI's population, the graduation rate is even lower - down to 21%.

Statistically, BLCI students fall into the category with the lowest expected college completion rate, yet BLCI students have the *highest* graduation rate at 72% - exceeding the national average for *all* segments and more than *triple* the rate of their student counterparts who did not benefit from a program like BLCI.

It is our 10-year commitment to developing the potential of our students that results in 100% of our students enrolling in college, and the added component of BLCI's alumni program paired with the students' years of preparation and perseverance that keeps them there.

Meet BLCI staff members Julian Villalvazo and Jenny Zuniga who are the leaders behind BLCI's College and Career Success Programs and hear from them what makes the College Success Program so unique.



Meet Julian Villalvazo! Julian has been supporting BLCI students for just over three years. He mentioned that one of his favorite ways that he supports students is by doing check-ins with alumni during their first year of college, usually on their campus. This, however, is not the only time Julian interacts with BLCI Alumni - he regularly stays in touch with students, sharing internship opportunities, scholarships, and providing guidance as needed.

Julian attended UC Santa Barbara where he received a Bachelors of Arts in Sociology and a minor in Education - Teacher Preparation.

He shared, "In my opinion, our students leave BLCI more confident in

themselves and their ability to succeed in college, because we have made a genuine effort to prepare them for the different aspects of college life. We want our students to leave our program knowing they can advocate for themselves, always ask for help when needed, and that we are happy to assist them when they're unsure of where to go to find that help."

Over the years, Julian has helped many students on their journey to becoming first-generation college students, but one story that particularly stands out to him is that of current BLCI Senior, Diana. When Diana joined BLCI in 4th grade, she didn't yet speak English, and has since endured many challenges in her life. Julian mentioned that she "is one of our most academically accomplished seniors with a GPA over 4.0 and has taken multiple college-level courses. She applied to nearly 20 schools, including several Ivy leagues, and has already been accepted into all five of the UC schools she applied to including UCLA!"



Meet Jenny Zuniga! Jenny joined the BLCI team about three months ago and has jumped right in to help our Chula Vista seniors prepare for college in the fall. She said that in working with alumni, she has realized the impact of BLCI and how our programs successfully provide the foundation, knowledge and confidence for our students to excel in college. One of her favorite ways that she is able to support our students is through regular 1:1 meetings where they can check-in, talk about potential new scholarship opportunities, assist with

managing any current scholarships, and also help with coordinating alumni events.

Jenny attended Southwestern College before transferring to SDSU to complete a bachelors in Spanish with a minor in Women's Studies. Five years later, she returned to school and recieved a Masters in Higher Education Administration from Georgia Southern University.

Although there are many to choose from, Jenny recognized current BLCI Chula Vista senior Denise as a stand-out success story. Jenny shared, "Denise has not only applied to Cal State and UC schools, but she also applied to multiple private schools including prestigious schools like Stanford, Harvard and Yale. Denise is extremely involved in and out of the school, whether creating fun yearbook projects or training as a cheerleader, she is heavily involved and manages to maintain above a 4.0 GPA. It's stories like hers that truly make my role as a CSP specialist worthwhile and rewarding overall."

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Programs**

Alumni Spotlight

BLCI Alumni Milenia Rocio Quintero Serrano recently shared on [LinkedIn](#) about her recent graduation from University of Southern California with both a bachelors *and* a masters degree!

Milenia completed her Bachelors in Sociology and a Masters of Studies in Law simultaneously through USC's progressive degree program.

"The last 4.5 years have not been easy. At one point I was managing being a full time undergraduate student, a full time grad student and working full time. I wouldn't trade my time at USC for the world and I am grateful for everyone who helped make this dream come true. It prides me to say that I graduated USC debt-free. I am extremely excited to begin my career in the legal field as an immigration paralegal - the field that inspired my educational aspirations. As a first generation college student and DACA recipient this wouldn't have been possible without my community" Milenia shared on LinkedIn, recognizing BLCI as one of the organizations that supported her on her journey.



BLCI is proud to play a role in supporting the dreams of first-generation students like Milenia! If you are interested in learning about ways you can support our students, contact us at info@blci.org

See Milenia's LinkedIn
Post

Make An Impact & Celebrate BLCI

Please join us for Opportunity For Impact 2023!

May 11, 2023 | 5-8 PM Bali Hai

Meet BLCI students, bid in the live and silent auction, enjoy cocktails and delicious food stations. Funds will support BLCI's existing college completion programs and help fund expansion efforts to increase the capacity at BLCI El Cajon and Chula Vista locations.



Thank you to our event sponsors for making an impact and ensuring our students are the first in their families to attend and graduate college.

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Early bird tickets are still available until March 31st! RSVP today to reserve your spot.

Purchase Tickets

Give The Gift of Education

Thank you for helping us break the cycle of poverty through education. With your support, we look forward to another year of sending 100% of our students to college.

Make an Impact
Today

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