

A FAMILY FIRST

GRADS FORGE NEW GROUND

First in families to earn degrees

By Alexis Blue
STAFF WRITER

When Carlos Martinez moved to Tucson from Mexico at the age of 9, he didn't speak any English.

Next week, the 21-year-old will graduate from the UA with a degree in computer engineering. Alongside him at the ceremony will be his older brother Salvador, 23, who will receive a degree in electrical engineering.

The two will be the first in their family to graduate from college.

"It's been a long journey," Carlos Martinez said. "It feels awesome."

The Martinez brothers are two of just over 100 December graduates who will attend tomorrow's fourth annual Celebration of Achievement, a pre-commencement ceremony hosted by the UA's Department of Multicultural Programs and Services to recognize underrepresented and first-generation graduates.

A little over 1,000 students representing ethnic minorities, first-generation graduates, income-eligible students and students with disabilities were invited to participate in the event, said Monica Vega, program coordinator for mul-



Salvador Martinez, left, an electrical engineering senior, Tanya Oliver, a psychology senior, and Carlos Martinez, a computer engineering senior, are graduating this semester. They are all the first people in their families to earn a college degree.

ticultural programs and services.

The students who chose to participate in the ceremony will have the chance to be recognized individually before their peers and family members.

"It's really for the students," Vega said. "It's an intimate event that allows them to be individually recognized."

For Carlos Martinez, the day is about more than per-

sonal recognition; it's an opportunity to say thank you to his family.

He said there were semesters when his family "barely made it" financially, but they never gave up.

Carlos Martinez said neither of his parents finished high school, and it was always important to them to see their sons go to college.

"They were always pushing us, saying, 'You have the opportunity to do something

with your life,'" he said.

Carlos Martinez, who had never even owned a computer when he entered college 4 1/2 years ago, said he now hopes to go to work for a software company to help support his family.

He said his goal is to enable his father, who has worked in construction for years, to retire.

"We want to give back to

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2,400 earn diplomas at winter graduation

By Julie Wetmore
STAFF WRITER

Today marks the last day of classes for the roughly 2,400 students who will graduate next week.

"It's especially hectic around here right now, with graduation and everything," said planning graduate student Marilyn Robinson.

The 129th Commencement Ceremony will take place in the McKale Center on Dec. 20, with the procession of candidates beginning at 9:10 a.m.

Degrees will be conferred upon about 2,400 students by President Peter Likins. Almost 2,000 undergraduate, 440 master's, and 213 doctoral degrees will be presented, said Vern Lamplot, associate director of News Services.

Toni Marie Massaro, dean of the James E. Rogers College of Law, will speak at the ceremony and deliver the commencement address.

"President Likins invited me to speak, and I will be talking about Brown vs. Board of Education and the responsibilities that come with higher education," she said.

Massaro said that this semester's graduating class is unique because the

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La Aldea residents unhappy

By Alexis Blue
STAFF WRITER

A group of 65 residents of the La Aldea graduate student-housing complex have come together to form a residents association because of their dissatisfaction with the apartments.

Members of the association, which formed last month, drafted a four-page letter, expressing their concerns over construction delays and disturbances, safety issues, and amenities at the apartment complex. They sent the letter to Residence Life and to Ambling Companies, the company that manages La Aldea.

The \$20 million privately owned housing complex located at North Euclid Avenue and East Fifth Street, just north of Coronado Residence Hall, was supposed to be completed by mid-August, but many residents were surprised when they showed up on their move-in date to find they couldn't move into the complex.

Stephanie Castillo, a management information systems graduate student, said she received a letter telling her she would be able



JACOB KONST/Arizona Daily Wildcat
Informational systems graduate student Stephanie Castillo signs a letter expressing dissatisfaction with La Aldea graduate housing on Saturday afternoon.

to move into La Aldea on Aug. 15, but when she arrived from New Mexico with her movers, the complex was not ready, and she had to stay with a friend and pay to put her belongings in storage.

Serhiy Porovskyy, a watershed management graduate student, said he ran into a similar situation.

After traveling to the UA from Ukraine, he had to stay in a hotel for two weeks while he awaited the completion of his apartment.

Elizabeth Montano, the manager of La Aldea, said that while all residents were expected to be able to move in on Aug. 15, the building had not passed necessary building inspections by that date. About half of the complex's 157 residents were placed in hotels, while others stayed with friends and family while they waited to move into the apartments.

She said the development company reimbursed students for the cost of their hotel stays.

While Porovskyy said he was reimbursed, he said he still had to pay the entire amount of August rent to La Aldea even though he couldn't move into the complex until the end of the month.

Montano said La Aldea did not reduce rent since displaced residents were provided with housing.

Apartments in the complex cost \$730 per month for a one bedroom, a two bedroom and two bath for \$530 per person, or a four

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Fund boost leads to more honors classes

By Andrea Kelly
STAFF WRITER

The Honors College has received additional funding to increase the number of classes offered next semester, but honors students have not noticed the impact.

Provost George Davis granted the Honors College about \$100,000 to be used to increase the number of honors sections offered or to hire more faculty members to teach honors sections next semester, said Patricia MacCorquodale, dean of the college.

"Our goal is 100 more faculty members supported by this," MacCorquodale said.

The college approached the Provost's Office because students said they were struggling to get into honors classes.

"Students have reported that one of the problems with graduating with honors is finding enough classes," MacCorquodale said.

But students who already registered for spring semester said they did not notice the increase.

Daniel Arana, a pre-business

freshman, said none of the classes he tried to register for was offered with honors sections.

"I'd like to be able to get into the classes I want, but business honors are some of the hard ones to find," Arana said.

Most students earn their honors credits from general education classes, English composition classes, and their senior thesis or capstone projects, MacCorquodale said.

She added that the need for more honors courses is greatest in the Colleges of Social and Behavioral Sciences and the College of Fine Arts.

The increase in funding will allow departments to use the money to help more students access honors classes within their major areas of study, MacCorquodale said.

Some students who cannot get into honors classes have had to sign contracts with their professors for extra work or different projects so they can receive the honors distinction.

"(Contracting) is like taking an

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