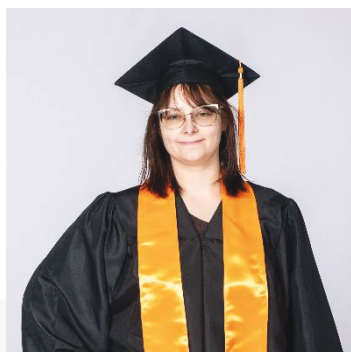


City Colleges of Chicago Class of 2025 Valedictorians and Salutatorians



Margaret Brewer—Valedictorian, Harold Washington College

Margaret Brewer enrolled at Harold Washington College a year after graduating from Whitney M. Young Magnet High School. She was supported by the Star Scholarship, which provided her with a tuition-free education.

Passionate about architecture, Margaret was a work-study student in the college's Architecture Department and joined Harold Washington's Architecture Club as a secretary before

being elected president.

After graduation, Margaret plans to transfer to a four-year university to major in structural engineering with a minor in architecture.



Glory Daniels—Salutatorian, Harold Washington College

Born and raised in Nigeria, Glory Daniels moved to the United States as a teenager. He excelled at Kenwood Academy High School, and his high GPA made him eligible for the Star Scholarship, which allowed him to enroll at Harold Washington College and complete his associate degree tuition-free.

Throughout his time at City Colleges, Glory demonstrated a strong commitment to excellence and leadership. He is a One

Million Degrees scholar, a member of the Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society, and a semifinalist for the prestigious Jack Kent Cooke Foundation's Undergraduate Transfer Scholarship.

In the fall, Glory will transfer to the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign to major in biochemistry. He hopes to attend medical school to become a cardiologist.



Olivia Barrett—Valedictorian, Truman College

Olivia Barrett is a non-binary, neurodivergent, first-generation college student who grew up in Michigan. They are pursuing an associate degree in mechanical engineering.

Olivia enrolled at Truman College after years of exploring the world and building community—co-founding social justice organizations, living in housing cooperatives, participating in mutual aid efforts, and building large-scale Burning Man art.

Olivia conducts structural engineering and materials science research through the Research Experience for Neurodiverse Engineering Students at the University of Connecticut. After graduation, they plan to pursue a bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering. Olivia ultimately aspires to build a career that blends technical expertise with creativity, leadership, and a commitment to addressing challenges like climate change.



Tuan Tran—Salutatorian, Truman College

Although Tuan Tran already completed a bachelor's degree in his home country of Vietnam, he found himself determined to start anew in the United States. Enrolling at Truman College gave him the opportunity to follow his dream of working in a field that would allow him to grow his passion for science.

While at Truman, Tuan built a flexible schedule that made it possible for him to continue supporting his family, complete his assignments, and maintain an impressive GPA.

After graduation, Tuan plans to transfer to UIC or RUSH University to continue his education and become a medical laboratory specialist.



Lakina Mabins—Valedictorian, Kennedy-King College

As a student at Kennedy-King College, Lakina Mabins excelled in time management. She completed her degree in criminal justice with a 4.0 GPA while working two jobs and running her small business. She is also a mother of five children and a grandmother.

A dedicated scholar throughout her journey, Lakina was inducted into the Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society, received the Presidential Scholar Award, and was nominated for the All-USA Academic Team. She is also part of the Partners in Education program, a collaboration between City Colleges and the Chicago Housing Authority to provide low or no-cost tuition to CHA residents.

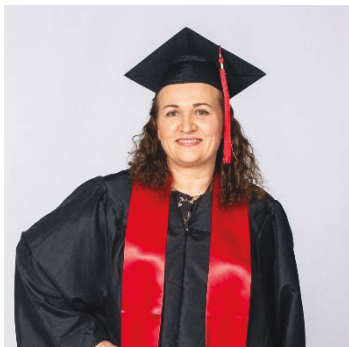
After graduation, Lakina plans to continue her education at National Louis University with the goal of becoming a forensic psychologist.



Andria Childress—Salutatorian, Kennedy-King College

Andria Nicole Childress is a native South Sider, born and raised in the Bronzeville neighborhood. As a mother of two boys, Andria balanced the demands of family and education with determination and grace, allowing her to complete her associate degree with a focus in journalism. As a One Million Degrees scholar, she utilized mentorship and other supports throughout her journey.

Andria's future plans include continuing her studies to obtain a master's degree in marketing, as she dreams of working for a firm that fosters her growth and innovation. Andria also aims to expand her audience of more than 200,000 followers across her content platforms, travel, and transform her passion for art and creativity into a stationery business.



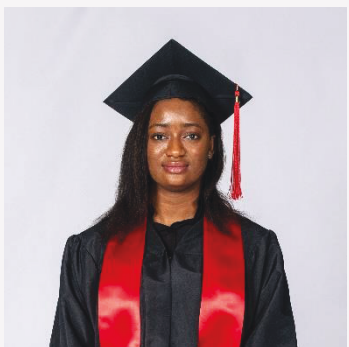
Malgorzata Kaczor—Valedictorian, Malcolm X College

Born and raised in Poland, Malgorzata Kaczor moved to the United States and began to raise a family here. Once her children grew older, she decided to enroll at Malcolm X College to study dental hygiene.

Malgorzata made the most of her time at Malcolm X as a member of the Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society. She consistently achieved high honors and was recognized with the prestigious Presidential Scholar Award for five

consecutive semesters.

After graduation, Malgorzata plans to begin her career as a dental hygienist. She wants to use her skills to provide stellar patient care, make a meaningful impact in her community, and make her family proud.

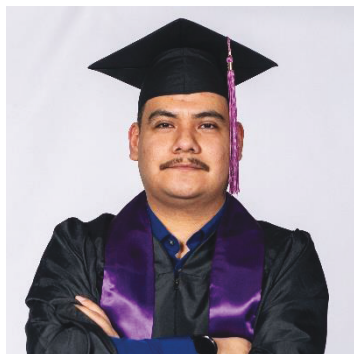


Shepherah Ochir—Salutatorian, Malcolm X College

Originally from Ghana, Shepherah Ochir enrolled at Malcolm X College as a first-generation college student in August 2022 after graduating from Gary Comer College Prep.

Her hard work in high school earned her the Star Scholarship, which allowed her to pursue an associate degree without paying anything out of pocket. Shepherah continued to succeed at Malcolm X, where she joined the Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society.

After graduation, she plans to pursue her Bachelor of Science in Nursing at a four-year university and become an operating room nurse.



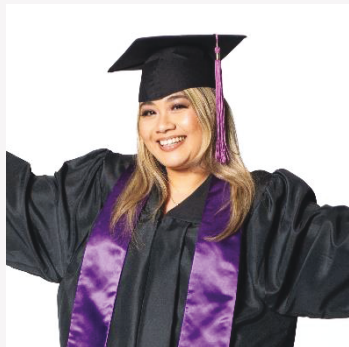
Joshua Estrada—Valedictorian, Olive-Harvey College

Joshua Sebastian Estrada was born in Guerrero, Mexico. He arrived in the United States with his hardworking single mother and his two younger brothers at the age of five.

Growing up, Joshua moved frequently throughout the city of Chicago, but the Back of the Yards neighborhood left the biggest mark on his life. It's also where he met his wife.

After graduating from Marine Leadership Academy, Joshua dreamed of joining the Marine Corps, but as a DACA recipient, that path was not an option. Instead, he pursued his passion for cars, becoming an automotive technician specializing in luxury vehicles, but he knew he was meant for something different.

Through a family connection at the Chicago Police Department, Joshua discovered Olive-Harvey College's Pathway to Policing—or "One Year and Out"—Program, which allowed him to earn an associate degree in criminal justice in just one year. Balancing 60 college credits while maintaining a 4.0 GPA was challenging but incredibly rewarding. This experience reignited Joshua's passion for education and set him on a path toward a future in policing.



Claudia Natasha—Salutatorian, Olive-Harvey College

Claudia Natasha was born and raised in Indonesia. Her passion for excellence and education inspired her to move to the United States in 2010 to pursue her dreams of higher education.

As a first-generation college student, Claudia was determined to succeed despite juggling her demands as a full-time student, employee, and mother. The late-night study sessions all paid off as Claudia now finds herself achieving one of her dreams: earning a degree and starting a more fulfilling life for her family.



Sheila Silva—Valedictorian, Daley College

Sheila Silva enrolled at Richard J. Daley College after learning her manufacturing job offered tuition assistance, sparking her interest in advancing her career. Initially, she pursued a computer numerical control (CNC) certificate, but her passion for manufacturing developed into a desire to obtain an associate degree.

During her time at Daley, Sheila maintained a 4.0 GPA, earned the Presidential Scholar Award, and was a member of the Honors Program and Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society—all while working full-time in manufacturing.

After graduation, Sheila plans to continue to grow her career, expand her expertise, and seek out new opportunities in the manufacturing field.

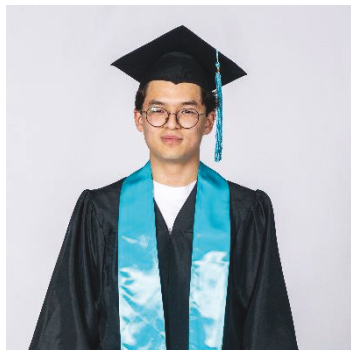


Maria Salto—Salutatorian, Daley College

Maria Salto is a resilient first-generation college graduate, leader, educator, and mother. As a teen mom, Maria had to put her education on hold to raise her children. As they grew older, she returned to school, balancing the demands of motherhood, a full-time job, and her studies. Her commitment paid off as she is now graduating with high honors and a 4.0 GPA.

Currently, Maria teaches a Head Start class where she supports and nurtures young learners and serves as the site's assistant director. Her goal is to run her own early childhood education center to ensure all children can access a high-quality education that honors their background and needs.

After graduation, Maria plans to continue her education to obtain her bachelor's degree.



Eldiar Emilbekov —Valedictorian, Wright College

Eldiar Emilbekov grew up in Kyrgyzstan in Central Asia and moved to the United States with his family in 2022 at the age of 18. Just three days later, he began working 60 hours a week.

Despite the challenges of adapting to a new country, the language barrier, culture shock, familial duties, and financial responsibilities, Eldiar made his education a priority, knowing it would make a difference in his life and his family's. He

enrolled at Wilbur Wright College and chose the Engineering and Computer Science program.

On top of 19 credit hours, Eldiar became a tutor, a mentor, vice president of Wright College's chapter of the Association for Computing Machinery (ACM), and a member of Phi Theta Kappa. Despite a packed schedule, he was never too busy to help his peers succeed.

In the fall, Eldiar will attend the Grainger College of Engineering at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign to study computer science.



Joseph Gonzalez—Salutatorian, Wright College

Joseph Gonzalez is a first-generation college student who enrolled at Wilbur Wright College after graduating from Lane Tech College Prep and working as a cell tower technician and climber.

The Star Scholarship allowed Joseph to enroll in school full time at no cost to him. This allowed Joseph to focus more on his studies and extracurriculars. He was the chapter president of the American Chemical Society, a Presidential Scholar, a

One Million Degrees scholar, a PepsiCo Uplift scholar, and a member of Phi Theta Kappa, all while maintaining a 4.0 GPA. Joseph also participated in a summer undergraduate research position at Northwestern's Center of Advanced Regenerative Engineering.

After obtaining his associate degree, Joseph plans to continue his education by pursuing his bachelor's degree in chemical engineering at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. He wants to work in the pharmaceutical industry and contribute to life-saving research in the fight against cancer.