Saddleback College Class of 2010
Recognized in Commencement Ceremony
$240,000 Awarded to 175 Students at Scholarship Ceremony

Mission Viejo, CA – Saddleback College recognized 2,194 students, 1,276 who earned an associate degree and 918 who earned a certificate of achievement recipients on Friday, May 21st at its annual commencement ceremony. The event, which was held in the college’s gymnasium, featured the traditional processional and reading of graduates’ names, along with Commencement Speaker Diane L. Harkey, Assemblywoman of California’s 73rd District and Saddleback College’s Alumna of the Year.

President Tod A. Burnett, Ed.D., offered welcome remarks and introduced the platform party, and South Orange County Community College District Board of Trustees President Donald P. Wagner and Chancellor Raghu P. Mathur offered congratulatory remarks.

During his welcome remarks, Dr. Burnett stated to the graduates, “By being here today you have demonstrated an enormous amount of persistence, determination, and effort, and for that you should be incredibly proud.”

Also featured was Commencement Student Speaker Lori Harris, a graduate who is transferring this fall to UC Irvine. Harris had the crowd in tears as she shared her story of loss and reflected on how Saddleback College helped her through her most difficult time. Wanting to be a role model for her five children, Harris, a widow, maintained a 4.0 GPA and will be studying Criminology, Law and Society at UC Irvine.

Members of the platform party included Board of Trustees Vice President Nancy M Padberg, Clerk Marcia Milchiker, and members William O. Jay, David B. Lang, and John S. Williams; Student Trustee Bi’Anca Bailey; Vice President for Instruction Rajen Vurdien, Ph.D.; Acting Vice President for Student Services Jerilyn Chuman; Academic Senate President Bob Cosgrove, Ph.D.; Associated Student Government President Delainey Taylor; incoming Associated Student Government President Melissa Fenerci; incoming Academic Senate President Carmen Dominguez; Academic Senate Past President Miki Mikolajczak; and Saddleback College’s deans and administrators.
During the ceremony, special recognition was given to Human Services Professor Rich Goodman, Saddleback College’s Professor of the Year, and to Music Professor Louise Jacobs, the college’s Associate Professor of the Year.

President Burnett gave special mention to the graduates and audience members who are also veterans, which brought a standing ovation from the attendance.

Students participating in commencement are candidates for Associate in Arts and Science degrees and occupational certificates of achievement. Over 1,500 students will also be transferring to four-year colleges and universities to continue studying for their baccalaureate degrees. This year’s graduates will be transferring to four-year institutions such as USC, UCLA, UC Berkeley, UC Irvine, San Diego State University, CSU Fullerton, and Arizona State University, among others.

Of the 1,276 students who earned an associate degree this year, 291 received honors, including 15 summa cum laude (4.0 grade point average), 106 magna cum laude (3.75 to 3.99 grade point average) and 170 cum laude (3.5 to 3.74 grade point average). Showing the diverse range of ages at the college, the youngest graduate is 17 years of age, and the most senior graduate is 65 years of age. One hundred thirty-five graduates are under the age of 20 and nineteen graduates are over the age of 55.

Following Commencement, Saddleback College held a Scholarship Ceremony where they awarded scholarships totaling more than $240,000 to more than 175 deserving students. Thanks to a generous donation from the Bernard Osher Foundation, Saddleback College awarded an additional $15,000 in scholarships to help financially strained students offset the cost of their college education. Scholarship presenters included Board of Trustees President Donald Wagner, Trustee David Lang, President Burnett, Saddleback College Foundation President Gary Capata, Saddleback College Foundation President Elect Donna Varner, and Scholarship Chairman Dr. Michael Foudy.

President Burnett presented Melissa Fenerci with the Associated Student Government President’s Scholarship for her excellent leadership to the college. Academic Senate President Cosgrove presented Delainey Taylor with the Associated Student Government Outstanding Student of the Year Scholarship for her leadership, community involvement, and academic achievement.

Located in Mission Viejo, Saddleback College provides quality higher education and training to the greater south Orange County community. Having served more than 500,000 students since 1968, Saddleback College offers over 300 degree and certificate programs to help students reach their personal, career, and educational goals. For more information, please visit www.saddleback.edu.