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They Led in Academics, Leadership and Service

President's Associates Awardees Didn't Follow or Get Out of the Way

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By Russ L. Hudson

Three outstanding Cal State Fullerton students have been chosen for the university's top awards in recognition of their scholastic achievement, leadership and community service.

The three undergraduates receiving Cal State Fullerton's President's Associates Awards will participate in the Commencement ceremonies Saturday, May 23 and Sunday, May 24, and will be recognized at the May 22 Honors Convocation.

This year's honorees are Fullerton residents Mia Arterberry and Ammaji Malla, recipients of the President's Associates Scholastic Award, and Raymond Austin Nation of Buena Park, who will receive the President's Associates University Service Award.

Mia N. Arterberry

Since her earliest days, Arterberry knew she wanted to be "a solid contributor to any community" of which she is a part. Her parents set an example: her father is a guidance counselor at Roubidoux High School in Riverside and her mother is a programmer for the Women's Resource Center at UC Riverside.

And for the last four years, Arterberry has contributed to the Titan community.

A President's Scholar whose name has appeared on the Dean's List every semester, Arterberry has been involved with the Golden Key International Honor Society and the Phi Kappa Phi National Honor Society. She also has served as a founding member of the Chi Psi Phi Chapter of the National Residence Hall Honorary.

The Fullerton resident is also a member of the Math Club and teaches the Mathematics 150A Supplemental Instruction Workshop, a pilot program. "My aim is for my students to succeed in their calculus class," she said.

"I wanted to leave the Titans a better community than when I got here. Although I cannot fully judge if I met that goal, I know that I am leaving the community a better Titan than when I arrived.



Mia N. Arterberry

"My time on the CSUF campus has taught me more about myself than I ever thought possible. I have had time to truly explore my mind and intellect and determine who I am as a person. I have pushed myself further than I thought I could go.

Arterberry graduates this month with a bachelor's in mathematics, then almost immediately will pursue her long-term goal of making a difference. She has been accepted into the Las Vegas Valley Corps of Teach For America, a program that places fresh college graduates in low-income areas to teach for two years.

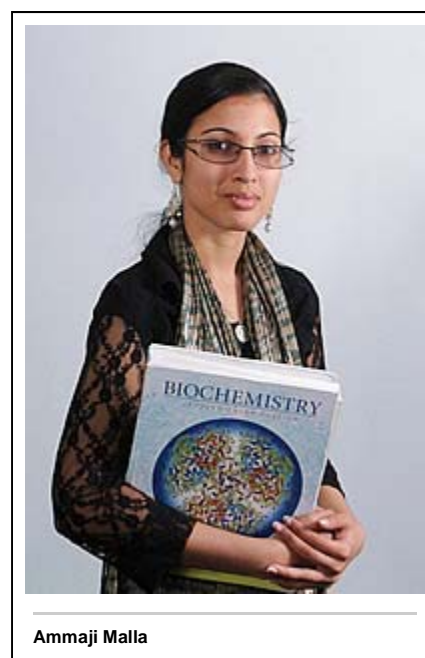
"During my two-year commitment with [Teach For America](#), I will be enrolled at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. During my first year I will be in a teaching credential program. In my second year, I will be in a mathematics education master's program.

"My ultimate career goal," Arterberry said, "is to be a driving force in mathematics education and on the front line of the fight to end education inequality."

Ammaji Malla

The cost of Ammaji Malla's education is much higher than most. When she was in the sixth grade in India, a natural disaster brought financial ruin, but her father refused to accept a lesser education for his children.

"My mother and father both worked day and night with two jobs and double shifts. We moved to America eight years ago, and they still do that. They sacrifice so much. It makes me truly value the education I have received at Cal State Fullerton," she said. "And," she added, "despite how little they have, they taught us that you always have something to give. My siblings and I hope to fulfill my father's dream some day to build a school for the less fortunate in a rural area of India. We all take so much from the world, sometimes we need to give back."



Ammaji Malla

But she has had her undergraduate moments, the Fullerton resident said. On the first day of her second semester, she spilled acid and broke beakers and flasks in a chemistry lab. The instructor publicly scolded her and wouldn't allow her to clean up the mess. But she made herself go back to class and she has since maintained a near 4.0 grade point average.

She discovered something about herself that didn't please her when she arrived at Cal State Fullerton. "I felt leadership skills were important, but I also felt I didn't have them. I had to do something. I found out about the University Leadership Conference, went through it, came back and took up the position of treasurer for the Council of Honor Societies."

Later, she was secretary and helped organize several events. "I learned a great deal about conducting myself in public, organizing, time management and record keeping," she said. Eventually, she advanced to the point that she gave a seminar in some of those skills to the Council of Honor Societies.

Among Malla's many activities, she was editor of the College of Natural Sciences and Mathematics' "Dimensions: The Journal of Undergraduate Research." She was busy off campus, too, taking part in annual toy drives for Christmas and to donate to hospital childrens' wards. She also raised funds for the

Sankara Eye Foundation and contributed to Corzaon de Vida, an organization to help orphans.

Malla graduates this month with a bachelor's in biochemistry, then plans to go to graduate school and, eventually, to become a researcher. But the most important lessons she learned were not in the lab, she said.

"I have become a very curious person, always with a desire to learn," said Malla. "I gave a presentation on my research and my analytical chemistry lab instructor came up to me and said he had much he could learn from me. That was so humble of him, and it made me realize that no matter how much education you have, you should always be willing to open your mind to new things, even if it is from someone you don't expect."

Raymond Austin Nation

Raymond Austin Nation took a 22-year hiatus from higher education and he wanted it to be different this time around.

"I was sure after graduating from Long Beach City College in 1982 with an associate degree in nursing that I had missed something. I was attending day and evening courses, just coming to campus to take my classes, then going home. I simply felt empty."

Nation went to work as a nurse, holding positions as medical-surgical nurse, charge nurse and nursing administrative supervisor. Although promoted to supervisory positions more than once, he couldn't advance further without a bachelor's degree, so his supervisors encouraged him to go back to school.



Raymond Austin Nation

Eventually, the Buena Park resident said, all the circumstances meshed. In 2004, after more than two decades as a nurse in Los Angeles and Orange counties, Nation enrolled in the bachelor's in nursing program at Cal State Fullerton.

"This time," he said, "I wanted to get involved on campus in things I enjoyed, while at the same time be in a position to give something back."

He did both.

When he learned there was no student group for nursing, he started the Nursing Students Association. He also founded the Long Beach Christian Fellowship Singles Ministry, and volunteers with the AIDS Services Foundation of Orange County. Nation serves on the advisory board of Global LifeWorks, is a member of the National Student Nurses Association and the Council of Black Nurses, and serves as vice president and board member of the Cypress Civic Theatre Guild.

Nation joined the American Assembly for Men in Nursing recently and began the process of starting a Southern California chapter.

All of the service he performed for others, as well as his excellent academic record, netted Nation not only

the prestigious President's Associate designation, but the Academic Senate Service Award and the ACE Student of the Year award, the latter given through the Dean of Students Office. All three awards are based on the student's leadership, academic standing and community service.

"I could not have imagined having my university experience without being involved in activities and community service opportunities. This great big university felt a lot less overwhelming as I started to learn my way around and get connected with new friends, faculty and staff," Nation said.

Nation graduates this month with a bachelor's in nursing, then in fall, he'll be back on campus to start his master's in nursing with a concentration in nursing leadership.

"My plan is to go on to a doctorate in nursing," the award winner said. "I want to teach nursing. It could be a dream to come back to CSUF to teach, or to a local community college, but I guess I have to keep my options open. I want to teach somewhere."

Meantime, he said, peers are encouraging him to get involved in student government. "That is so flattering. I just might. I might run for president."

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