



News Release

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Century Celebrates PACE Award, Graduation

Century College's [Preparing to Achieve a College Education \(PACE\) program](#) this year received the Best Practices in Diversity award from Minnesota State Colleges and Universities. On Saturday, May 8, Century hosted a festive graduation ceremony for the three cohorts of PACE high school students who successfully completed the program and will be attending college next fall.

“You are very fortunate to have participated in a program that lets you know what is expected of you in college,” Century President Larry Litecky told the PACE graduates. “You are not only ready to read, write, speak and listen, you are also ready to think clearly with depth and breadth. Moving into college is about moving into life and PACE has helped you get ready for that journey. The hope is that learning will continue to be the centerpiece of who you are as a human being.”

Litecky said after love and maintaining a just society, learning is one of the top three things that a person should organize his or her life around.

Student speaker Ramla Farah of Ubah Medical Academy said after participating in PACE for two years and two summers, including regular Saturday morning classes, she is grateful she stayed with the program. “We all have come a long way,” she said. “We have had the best experience you can ever imagine. We lived the college life with fun times, laughter, trips and things I will never forget.”

Student speaker Samuel Kollie of Johnson Senior High School, an immigrant from Liberia, said being part of PACE was one of the greatest experiences of his life. “I came here because of my family, and I stayed with this for my country,” he said.

Sheila Yang of Harding Senior High School said she has learned that you have to put yourself in a position to win, and that begins with an education. After quoting her father in Hmong, Yang added, “We are the driving force of the future.”

PACE students and their families, who filled the West Campus Theatre, enjoyed a banquet in the West Campus cafeteria after the ceremony.

The mission of PACE is to retain underrepresented students in high school and ensure their transfer to institutions of higher education. PACE reaches out to low-income, first-generation college students from underserved populations. The program targets students in the academic middle who display college potential.

PACE students have posted strong, measurable outcomes in both the college classroom and their respective high schools. The first cohort of PACE students completed their coursework in May 2007. The core cohort of 20 students posted a 92 percent course completion rate and earned 364 college credits. The second cohort of 24 PACE students began in the summer of 2007 and posted a 93 percent course completion rate and earned 292 college credits. One hundred percent of the students from these first two

cohorts enrolled in college in the fall after their senior year. The percentage of students persisting or completing a college certificate or degree is in the nineties.

During the summer of 2008, three new PACE cohorts began at Century College. These cohorts have posted a 91 percent credit completion rate, an average GPA of 2.96, and have earned a total of 935 college credits thus far. In the summer of 2009, an additional cohort of 25 students began and has posted similarly strong outcomes – a credit completion rate of 92 percent, an average GPA of 2.92 and a total of 121 credits earned thus far.

President Litecky said, “We need to expand our partnerships with St. Paul’s public high schools and middle schools. For many years we have had successful programs in Arlington, Johnson, Como and Harding. We intend to continue our relationship with those students to assist them in becoming career – and college- ready. We also want to expand and deepen that relationship in spite of difficult economic challenges.”