



IMPERIAL COUNTY EXECUTIVE OFFICE PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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County of Imperial Selects Inaugural Cohort of Five Local Students for 2021 Fellowship Program

July 13, 2021 – The County of Imperial is proud to announce the names of the five local college students selected for the 2021 Fellowship Program. Created this year and awarded for the first time, the Fellowship will provide these five students with the opportunity to learn from leaders in local government and get invaluable first-hand experience in the decision-making process on a countywide level. Each Fellow will be awarded a scholarship up to \$20,000 and, upon graduation, a limited-term, full-time employment position with the County of Imperial for 18 months.

The inaugural cohort includes the following individuals based on their record of leadership and capability as demonstrated through the application and interview process by administrators from various County departments:

- Nancy Arias.

Arias is 20 years old, from the city of Imperial, and is currently a student at Imperial Valley College (IVC). She will soon be transferring to San Diego State University to obtain her Bachelor's degree in hopes of continuing her studies to become a Nurse Practitioner.

- Valeria Aguilar Echegaray

Echegaray is 20 years old and currently lives in El Centro after emigrating from Mexico several years ago. She recently graduated from IVC, and will be transferring to California State University, San Marcos to obtain her Bachelor's degree in political science. She hopes to pursue a career in advocating for the underserved and underprivileged in her community and around the world.

- Christopher Galarte

Galarte is 21 years old, from the city of Brawley, and will be transferring to San Diego State University to pursue a degree in psychology. Galarte's goal is to become a psychologist and help better his community through mental health services.

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- Ana Sofia Rodriguez

Rodriguez is 20 years old, from El Centro, and will be attending University of California, Los Angeles in the Fall to pursue a Bachelor of Arts degree in Spanish and Portuguese. Rodriguez is fluent in multiple languages and wants to pursue a career in working with bilingual children who have speech disorders.

- Sofia Vasquez

Vasquez is 19 years old, from Brawley, and will be transferring to University of California, San Diego in the Fall to pursue a Bachelor's degree in political science. Her goal is to become a state-certified court interpreter before pursuing an advanced degree in academia or media.

"This inaugural cohort reflects the remarkable talent that is found here in our County," stated Chairman of the Board of Supervisors, Michael W. Kelley. "These young individuals are leaders already and I am excited to see the contributions they will make to our community and County departments."

"I'm glad to see the Board's vision for this Fellowship program come to fruition with the selection of these five impressive students. The County is investing a vast amount of resources into this program, and County departments are excited to work alongside these five Fellows and guide them on their career paths," stated County Librarian, Crystal Duran.

The 2021 County Fellowship is a pilot program approved by the Imperial County Board of Supervisors in March 2021 utilizing \$1 million in Public Benefit Program funds. A brief introductory video of the Fellows is available on the County's official YouTube page at the following link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qcBtygiRWXs>.

For more information on the Fellowship and the selected Fellows, contact Crystal Duran, County Librarian, at CrystalDuran@co.imperial.ca.us.

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