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**Jimmy Santiago Baca to Keynote
SFCC's Commencement Ceremonies
Friday, May 25 at 5 p.m.**

Class of 2011 is largest graduating class in college's history

Santa Fe, NM— More than 460 students will receive a total of more than 520 degrees and certificates during Santa Fe Community College's graduation ceremony, being held Wednesday, May 25, at 5 p.m. in the William C. Witter Fitness Education Center on the SFCC campus, 6401 Richards Ave. This is by far the largest graduation class in the college's 28-year history, representing nearly 30 percent more graduates than in 2010.

Award-winning novelist, poet and playwright Jimmy Santiago Baca will deliver the keynote speech. Baca is a native New Mexican of Hispanic and Native American heritage. His experiences as he progressed from a homeless, illiterate teenager to a prison inmate, then to a college graduate and finally to a respected writer of international renown serve as inspiration to those who battle adversity and hardships to pursue an education and develop rewarding careers. A recipient of numerous prestigious awards, Baca earned a GED as his first step toward a lifelong commitment to education and is a compelling and engaging speaker. (Photo attached.)

At the commencement ceremony, 136 students will receive an Associate in Applied Science degree, 211 will receive certificates, 146 will receive an Associate in Arts degree, 12 will receive an Associate in Science degree, and eight students will receive an Associate in Applied Arts degree. Of the 463 graduates, two-thirds are female. The average age is 35, with ages ranging from 16 to 76. More than half are minorities, with 40 percent white, 40.3 percent Hispanic, 2.1 percent Native American, 1.5 percent black and 1.3 percent Asian (14.8 percent unreported).

Current graduates Maxwell Barnett and Paul Duran will deliver student addresses. Barnett, a 21-year-old Albuquerque resident, will receive an Associate of Applied Science degree in environmental technology with a concentration in solar energy, a field he chose on the advice of a "green" architect and family friend. The environmentally-minded graduate says he commuted to SFCC via the Railrunner. This summer he will travel to France and study the language in an immersion program through a university in Lyon.

Duran, 25, of Santa Fe, earned an Associate of Arts degree in general studies. A former Marine sergeant whose five-year career included three overseas deployments, he drew GI Bill benefits to help finance college. Duran will transfer to the University of New Mexico to earn bachelor's and master's degrees and plans to teach at the college level. He will explain from personal experience how education provides the tools one needs to advance and succeed.

To accommodate the many graduates and their families, the college will give priority in the fitness center parking lot to those who need disability access and provide free shuttle bus service from outlying parking lots for other guests. For those unable to attend in person, the graduation ceremony will air live May 25 on SFCTV Comcast 16 and be rebroadcast Friday, May 27, at 7 p.m.

Earlier in the day, at 1 p.m., SFCC's Department of Nursing Education will hold its pinning ceremony for 31 student nurses, 25 percent of whom are male. That event also takes place in the William C. Witter Fitness Education Center.

About Santa Fe Community College: *For more than 25 years, Santa Fe Community College has been the gateway to success for individuals and the community by providing affordable, high quality educational programs that serve the social, cultural, technological and economic needs of a diverse community. The college serves more than 14,500 students per year in its credit, noncredit and adult basic education programs. For further information, visit www.sfccnm.edu or call (505) 428-1000. Follow us: [SFCC on Facebook](#), [SFCC on Twitter](#).*

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