



# Press Release

Contact: Columbia College President  
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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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## **COLUMBIA COLLEGE GRADUATES FIRE ACADEMY STUDENTS**

The Columbia College Fire Academy is happy to announce that 33 successful students have earned graduation and Certificates of Completion from the Fire Technology Program. Students who completed Firefighter 1 and 2 were awarded their certificates on April 28, 2022, at Carkeet Park.

Certificates are awarded upon students' successful completion of academic and manipulative training mandated for California Firefighter 1 & 2 Certification. The students must additionally complete six months of full-time or a year of part-time field experience before applying for the state certification.

"Some graduates will apply for or continue with reserve, intern, and volunteer positions at local fire departments that they've held since entering the academy," said Chief Shane Warner, Columbia College Fire Technology Program Coordinator/Instructor. Instructor Andy Van Hoogmoed noted, "Some students have already completed the standard application process for seasonal employment with CAL Fire, Forest Service, and local fire agencies."

The students completed an intense 16 weeks of rigorous training designed to help serious candidates meet the requirements for careers as professional firefighters, including more than 576 hours of academic and manipulative training, according to Chief Shane Warner.

In addition to “routine” fire training classes, they received specialized training in Incident Command Systems, Hazardous Materials, Seasonal Wildland Firefighting classes, Confined Space, Basic Power Saw Safety, and Vehicle Extrication.

Special thanks are owed to the Columbia College Fire Department, Copperopolis Fire District, Ebbetts Pass Fire District, Columbia Fire District, Sonora City Fire Department, Twain Harte Fire Department, Tuolumne Band of Me-Wuk Indian Rancheria Fire Department, Tuolumne City Fire Department, Mi Wuk Sugar Pine Fire Department, Tuolumne County Fire Department, CAL Fire TCU, and Sierra Conservation Center.

“Columbia College Fire Science students are looked at as role models on our campus,” said Steve Amador, Dean of Career Technical Education. “These students are hardworking and dedicated to their success. They completed this intensive 16-week program during Covid and have shown their fellow students, their families, and their community that hard work can overcome the toughest obstacles. I am proud of each and every one of them.”

Columbia College President, Dr. Lena Tran, said, “I applaud our graduates. Firefighters have a demanding job that requires strength, commitment, and motivation and challenges their mental, emotional, and physical preparedness. We are proud to know that our students are well-trained to serve the community.”

For further information, contact Fire Academy Chief Shane Warner at 588-5308 or Captain Andy Van Hoogmoed at 588-5153.