



Press Release

Contact: Columbia College President's Office
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

WHO: Columbia College
WHAT: Fire Academy Graduation
WHERE: Columbia College Oak Pavilion

COLUMBIA COLLEGE GRADUATES FIRE ACADEMY STUDENTS

The Columbia College Fire Academy is happy to announce that 34 successful students have earned graduation and Certificates of Completion from the Fire Technology Program. Students who completed Firefighter 1 and 2 will be awarded their certificates on December 14, 2023 at Columbia College in Oak Pavilion at 6pm.

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, "Students are given the opportunity to complete the standard application process for seasonal employment with CAL FIRE, US 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 616 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, Firefighter Survival, Low Angle Rope Rescue, Mental Health and Peer Support, Confined Space, Basic Power Saw Safety, and Common Passenger Vehicle Rescue.

Special thanks are owed to the Columbia College Fire Department, Copperopolis Fire Protection District, Ebbetts Pass Fire District, Castle Training Center, Sonora City Fire Department, Tuolumne City Fire Department, Mi Wuk Sugar Pine Fire Department, Tuolumne County Fire Department, CAL FIRE TCU, CAL FIRE MMU, Hayward Fire Department, Merced Fire Department, Vic's Towing and Sierra Conservation Center.

“We are incredibly proud of the hard work and perseverance these students have demonstrated. I’m confident that the graduates’ passion for service, coupled with the skills and knowledge gained at the Columbia College Fire Academy, has them well prepared to perform the critical work provided by firefighters in our community.” said Dr. Brandon Price, Dean of Career Technical Education.

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.