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Contact: Paul Brubaker
973-518-2298

INTERNATIONAL BACCALAUREATE SENIOR ACCEPTED AT CORNELL UNIVERSITY

Nicole Velecela will attend the school’s College of Human Ecology

***Photo attached: Nicole Velecela***

PATerson – Superintendent of Schools Eileen F. Shafer announced today that Nicole Velecela, a senior in the International Baccalaureate (IB) Program at International High School (IHS), has been accepted at Cornell University. Velecela will begin studying at the Ivy League university’s College of Human Ecology in the fall.

“I want to extend the district’s warmest congratulations to Nicole for being accepted into one of the nation’s best universities,” said Shafer. “Nicole worked hard to achieve this great opportunity, and she had the support of three strong women in her family – her grandmother Betty, her Aunt Mary, and most especially, her mother, Milagros, whose unfailing support of Nicole was founded upon making education the top priority in their household. I congratulate all of them, and I thank Nicole’s teachers and administrators who worked to draw out the best of Nicole’s abilities. We all look forward to Nicole’s success at Cornell.”

“It felt surreal reading the acceptance letter and seeing the word ‘Congratulations’ first,” said Velecela, who has grown accustomed to being asked where she will go after she graduates high school. “Thankfully, I can reply with a simple answer: Cornell University.”

Velecela intends to major in Human Biology, Health, and Society which she said will give her insight into health by combining natural/life sciences with social sciences.

“For me, this is especially important for the medical career that I will pursue because a doctor is more than a worker in a facility,” she said. “Doctors are members of society with a mission to encourage health and wellbeing to all people in our society.”

Velecela is a first generation American. Her mother, Milagros, came to the United States from Peru and raised Nicole as a single mother as she worked long hours as a cook.

“Growing up, my mom ensured that my focus on my education was always my priority,” said Velecela. “Because of this, I learned to be independent with my academic-related activities and push myself to get where I want to be.”
Velecela is a member of the National Honor Society who has been active in many extracurricular activities including the National Chinese Honor Society, the Robotics Club, and playing volleyball. But she said it was the 4-H Science Pathways Program that had the greatest impact on her.

“I had the chance to meet new people, learn about STEM and leadership, and also do community service activities,” said Velecela.

With regard to the IB program, Velecela said, “Throughout these years, the program has allowed me to develop a foundation as a student and person. It requires students to think beyond and seek more knowledge, and although the coursework can sometimes be time-consuming, the program has also prepared me to develop skills as I get ready to face the next step in my life: college.”

Velecela is the third senior from International High School this year to be accepted into a world renowned university. Earlier this year, Emily Cruz was accepted by Johns Hopkins University and Cindy Munoz was accepted by the University of Pennsylvania. All three students intend to enter careers in the health care field.

International High School is the only school in Passaic County, and only one of 17 schools in New Jersey, to offer the IB Program.

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