

“Magnificent 7”

Luna Dental Assistant students double-up on classes to graduate in spring

Luna Community College Dental Assisting students made history this past semester. Glorianna Baca, Aubrie Chavez, Tabitha Leyba, Kimmieah Martinez, Chantel Rivera, Isaiah Sandoval and Amber Trujillo all took 10 classes instead of a normal five-course load in the spring. Because of their hard work and dedication, they were official graduates of Luna on May 24.

The seven students and their instructors Gloria Pacheco and Dawna Ortega Gallegos, upon receiving news in November of Luna’s uncertain future accreditation status by the Higher Learning Commission, decided to double-up the teaching and course load in the spring to make sure they would earn their credentials in May, instead of July like in previous years. Because of their accomplishments, some people that have observed the dental assisting students accomplishments have dubbed them “The Magnificent 7.”

The Higher Learning Commission will make its decision on whether Luna



Luna Dental Assisting students had a pinning ceremony recently. Pictured (l-r) are Instructor Dawna Ortega Gallegos, Amber Trujillo, Isaiah Sandoval, Chantel Rivera, Kimmieah Martinez, Tabitha Leyba, Aubrie Chaves and Glorianna Baca.

will keep its accreditation in the last week of June.

“I can’t stress enough on how dedicated and committed these students were to finishing early,” said Pacheco. “They had the willingness to get this done.”

Amber Trujillo, one of the seven students said she never thought about transferring or looking back after hearing that the Higher Learning Commission placed Luna on a Show Cause Order in

November.

“I was never negative towards it,” said Trujillo. “I felt confident and I have a lot of pride in Luna and I wanted to graduate from here. It was stressful, but we got through it. We appreciate Gloria and Dawna; we couldn’t have chosen two better instructors.” Trujillo earned her GED at Luna and went on to the Dental Assisting Program.

Pacheco said that the 22-hour course load taken by the seven students in the spring would have normally been 15. Students would have been taking the other seven hours in the summer. Pacheco said that 71 percent of students passed

the national boards and the students that did not pass it the first time have to retake the test by the end of June. In addition to the class load, all seven students did 300 hours of clinicals, 100 more than normal.

“They all got jobs,” said Pacheco. “I’m proud to be an employee of Luna. We’re an elite group of people that are supportive of one another and of our students.”