



CEI graduates 1st student with arts degree

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Kayla Flowers, who graduated from the College of Eastern Idaho on Tuesday, is the first person to do so with an associate of arts degree. The school, formerly Eastern Idaho Technical College, became a community college last year. Monte LaOrange / mlaorange@postregister.com



Kayla Flowers, who graduated from the College of Eastern Idaho on Tuesday, is the first person to do so with an associate of arts degree. It was the fifth college she had attended. “I really hope this school just grows, because they’ve just been the best school,” she said. “They’ve been so helpful and supportive.” Monte LaOrange / mLaorange@postregister.com

By NATHAN BROWN
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Kayla Flowers had always liked going to college. But she didn’t feel like she was getting any direction.

The northern California native had been to four colleges, starting at California State University in Sacramento, near where she grew up, and going to three other schools in California after that. She moved to Idaho Falls in June, since her mother lived here. That was just a month after Bonneville County voters had decided to create a community college district, transforming Eastern Idaho Technical College into the College of Eastern Idaho.

She said she had gotten mostly A’s and B’s in her classes. She wanted to continue her education, but was worried she might not be able to register, given the timing of her move.

“Luckily they really worked with me so well,” she said of CEI’s counselors. “They really accommodated and made sure I was going to get into the fall semester.”

Unlike at her previous colleges, she said, CEI’s counselors took a look at what credits she had already earned and devised a plan with her to get her a degree.

“I really hope this school just grows, because they’ve just been the best school,” she said. “They’ve been so helpful and supportive.”

On Tuesday night, among the 514 other people getting associate of applied science and general education development degrees, Flowers got her associate of arts degree. She is the first person to earn this degree at CEI, now that the college has expanded its offerings to include more general curricula alongside its vocational offerings.

As it turned out Flowers had the most credits in the arts and humanities.

“That turned out to be exciting, because I really like the arts,” she said.

She took nine credits worth of classes in the fall semester and six in the spring, including American history, humanities, art history, and a pre-calculus class that she was worried about but ended up doing well in.

“I guess I was pretty good at it, but I don’t want to do it again or make a career out of it,” she said.

Her immediate plan is to move to Arkansas, where she has some relatives, and spend a few weeks hiking in the Ozarks. Flowers said she wants to go back to college in spring 2019 and eventually get her bachelor’s degree, but isn’t sure where yet.

She worked as a receptionist at a veterinarian’s office in California a while ago, where she would sometimes also do veterinarian technician tasks such as cleaning animals’ teeth. One thing she is considering is getting a science degree that would let her work with animals, perhaps at a veterinarian’s office or at a zoo.

“If I could go to Africa and save the elephants, that would be what I really want to do,” she said.

Another idea she is weighing is teaching English abroad.

Right now, she is working at Aspire Human Services in Idaho Falls, helping to provide services to people with disabilities. While she doesn’t know exactly what she wants to do with the rest of her life, Flowers said her job there has opened her eyes to the potential of doing similar work in the future.

“I just like the feeling of being there for people who need me, or animals who may need me,” she said. “I think it’s kind of a toss-up. I think whatever door opens for me, I’ll sure take it.”

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