



# Whittier Union HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT

*To Achieve and Maintain Excellence...*

## NEWS RELEASE

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:** Feb. 16, 2021    **CONTACT:** Andrea Garcia    **PHONE:** 909-273-9840

## Pioneer High School Seniors Receive Award of Merit for Academics, Communication Skills

**WHITTIER** – Pioneer High School seniors Michael and Sofia Lagos are determined to keep their classmates connected. The fraternal twins are two of the driving forces behind Pioneer’s weekly Titan News Flash video report, with Michael acting as director and co-anchor and Sofia serving as writer and editor. Together, they bring a sense of normalcy and relevance to distance learning-weary students.

Michael and Sofia are also academic standouts, in a way that perfectly encapsulates the immutable bond of twins – both have 4.53 GPAs, have completed 13 AP courses apiece, and have earned straight A’s.

For their leadership in maintaining Titan culture and as co-recipients of Pioneer’s 2020-21 Stand Out Student award, Sofia and Michael were recognized by the Whittier Union Board of Trustees with Awards of Merit during the Feb. 9 board meeting.

“I want to thank the biggest inspiration of my life, my parents Angel and Elva Lagos. They came to America with a dream and realized that dream through Sofia and I,” Michael said. “I am forever grateful to the many teachers who have made lasting impacts in my life. I would like to dedicate this award to the ASB cabinet of 2020-21. Their support has been a great influence in my life.”

Michael has dedicated hundreds of hours to the Titan News Flash. He recruited Sofia to work behind the scenes to help keep their classmates informed on essential information, including academic due dates, sports conditioning, the college application process, acquiring financial aid, and scholarship opportunities.

“I would like to thank all those who supported me, especially my parents, who gave me the opportunity to succeed through sacrifices and love,” Sofia said. “Also, my close friends who have not only been there for me but, as my second family, make each day a little bit better, and to all the teachers who have guided me by example, shown me humor and independence, and how to find joy.”

Under the guidance of the Lagos twins, Titan Pride is front and center in each episode, with Pioneer students uploading pictures, sharing recipes, honoring birthdays, giving shoutouts and arranging cameos from staff members.

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Even the Lagos twins' career aspirations create a symmetry. While Michael wants to build sustainable communities as a green architect, challenging large corporations responsible for environmental emissions, Sofia wants to tear down the walls of inequality and discrimination in health care for underrepresented communities as a biomedical engineer, addressing the social factors that result in higher mortality rates for people of color.

Michael serves as Pioneer's ASB President and looks to attend his dream school, USC. Sofia is a star athlete, helping guide the Lady Titans to the CIF playoffs, and earned "Commendation Status" from the College Board for placing in the top 2.5% in the nation for her PSAT scores.

"Sofia and Michael have very different goals, but their bond keeps them close to one another and they provide each other with endless love and encouragement," Pioneer High Principal Lilia Bozigian said. "They are Pioneer's dynamic duo, maintaining school culture during distance learning. Their leadership, perseverance, and excellence in all they touch have made Pioneer High a better place."

### PHOTO CAPTIONS

**WUHSD\_AWARDOFMERIT1:** Pioneer High School senior Michael Lagos receives an Award of Merit from principal Lilia Bozigian after being honored by the Whittier Union Board of Trustees for his academic achievements and communication skills. Michael shared the honor with his twin sister, Sofia.

**WUHSD\_AWARDOFMERIT2:** Pioneer High School senior Sofia Lagos receives an Award of Merit from principal Lilia Bozigian after being honored by the Whittier Union Board of Trustees for her academic achievements and communication skills. Sofia shared the honor with her twin brother, Michael.

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#### OUR MISSION:

The Whittier Union High School District provides all students with an engaging, quality standards-based instructional program delivered by a well-trained staff resulting in improved student achievement. Whittier Union High School District works to achieve and maintain excellence in providing a comprehensive education for all students.

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