



Maria (left) and Yamelaine Garcia

Class of 2012

**Maria Garcia
Yamelaine Garcia**

**Associate in Science Degree
in Liberal Arts/
Pre-Professional Scientific**

Phi Theta Kappa

Paterson Twins Emigrated from the Dominican Republic. The Former ESL Students Graduate Together and Plan Careers in Science.

Maria and Yamelaine Garcia entered PCCC together in 2008. They took most of their classes together, both majored in pre-professional scientific, were inducted into the honor society at the same ceremony, and will graduate together this week with the same degree and major.

“People confuse us all the time,” said Maria who is one minute older than her identical twin. The 20-year-old sisters plan to enter Rutgers University in September where they’ll both prepare for careers as clinical lab scientists, the same career path their mother followed.

“I love science,” said Yamelaine, known as Yame. “It’s engaging.” Maria agreed. “I really enjoy dissections,” she said. “We dissected crayfish, squid, and lots of other things. It felt powerful...like surgery.”

Professor Kala Mayur, who had both women in her biology class, described Yame and Maria as “good and hardworking students who had to overcome some obstacles to reach their goals.”

The twins were born in the Dominican Republic where their father was an orthopedic physician. The family emigrated to the United States when Maria and Yame were nearly twelve.

They knew little English and enrolled in their new school mid-year, taking English-As-A-Second Language (ESL) classes. "It was hard to catch up," said Yame who watched television to improve her language skills.

The Paterson residents are graduates of Eastside High School and have an older sister, Daysiling, who had also attended PCCC.

Though they took college classes together, Yame said they didn't study or do assignments together very much. "We have different learning styles," she explained. "Maria gets things faster, and I need more time to absorb material."

Maria has special regard for math Professor Radha Sankahran. "She makes math fun," said Maria. "You can feel her passion for math, and she makes you passionate for it, too." Yame could not single out just one professor as a favorite. "They have different styles, and you appreciate and learn from that," she said.

Maria and Yame are both members of the science club and participated in other campus activities, finding PCCC congenial and friendly. "I like that at PCCC you get to know everyone and it feels like a family," said Maria.

Yame thought that attending community college was a helpful preparation for a four-year college. "It's a way to test the experience without going to such a big school first," she said.

Though they graduate this week, the sisters will continue their campus jobs over the summer. "No vacations for us," laughed Maria, who is a work study in the science department where she sets up the labs. Yame works part-time in the chemistry department doing the preparations for experiments.

Are they nervous about going to Rutgers in the Fall? "A little, but we'll be going together," said Yame. Maria added, "It's exciting, but we're really going to miss PCCC."