

MESA Milestones

Featuring momentous affairs of the MESA program at Allan Hancock College

Spring 2020

The Women Engineers of AHC Sponsored by Cal Poly's

by Christine Reed, MESA Counselor/Coordinator

On January 23, 2020, Cal Poly, SLO's Society of Women Engineers (SWE) sponsored a table at their Evening with Industry event for five Allan Hancock students plus one Advisor. Hosted by SWE, the event was held at the Alex Madonna Expo Center from 6PM – 9PM and featured a networking reception, keynote address, award ceremony, and dinner. Additionally, two SWE Central Coast Professional Section mentors were seated at our table to get to know the AHC students. Attendees from AHC Christine Reed, Priscilla Perez, Fatima Quintanar, Esmeralda Sanchez, Vanessa Ortiz, and Tracy Wittman.



Pursuing My Dream

by Leta Dawson, MESA Student, Marine Biology

Hi, my name is Leta and I am a marine biology student for transfer. I have lived my entire life near the beach, growing up surfing, and playing at the beach. I have always had a strong connection to the ocean and perhaps this is why I feel such a strong need to become a marine biologist ever since I was a young girl. But being able to say this was not always easy. I struggled my entire life with math and physics, and I was told at multiple schools that I should try to find another passion, so I jumped around, feeling stupid and lost. Eventually I transferred to an alternative school where I could receive high school and college credit for my work. This didn't change much and I ended up dropping out to travel to Argentina for 6 months as an exchange student. Where I didn't do well either and was sent back to the US.



Once I returned, I was not in the mood for school, but continued to attend SBCC, where I failed every class I took. I was spending all my time partying into the early morning and working 2 jobs. I had made the decision that I just was not meant to get an education and that I would just continue working the hospitality business serving others.

Fast forward to 2012, I had just gotten out of another abusive relationship, and I had grown to hate working in restaurants and bars. I was barely making ends meet, and it felt like I was going nowhere. Stuck in a hole of binge drinking on my days off and living off top ramen I decided to make a change. I started going to the gym, quit smoking and started studying for the NASM CPT exam. Things started to look better after this. I was in a healthy and happy relationship. I was healthy and honestly passing the CPT exam really helped boost my confidence.

In 2016 I was feeling restless again, and really unhappy in my job at the athletic club. I decided I was going to go back to school, give it one last good try. Like actually attend class and do the homework.

Making the decision that SBCC was not the best fit and instead came to Allan Hancock. Things were going great until I had to pick a major for financial aid. Again, I was told that since math was not my strong suit I should consider something other than marine biology, so I studied art, specifically photography and design. I loved it, I was able to be creative and felt like I wasn't too bad at it, but the fear of finding work and being able to make a living was constantly in my mind; plus everything I was photographing was all beach related. After getting scuba certified, I was spending every possible amount of my free time diving. This is when I really started to reconsider my major again. I had finished all my GE's and decided that I did not care how hard the classes were, I was going to push through and study hard to be a marine biologist. It hasn't been easy, but after discovering MESA and working with everyone there, school has become much more fun, and I actually love my Calc 1 class. I am feeling much more confident and at ease with school and that's because of everyone at MESA, students, tutors, and the faculty. They have all helped me reach my goals.

As a marine biologist I want to find ways to help protect the natural resources the oceans provide us and bring them back to their former glory. I remember hearing the stories my dad and older brothers would tell and seeing pictures of record-breaking fish in the thousands. Due to overfishing, and chemical changes in the environment we are losing many species and the protection of reefs and mangroves. My interests in the with the marine biology field are: Shark and ray conservation, coral reefs and mangrove conservation, and marine protected areas and the use of decommissioned oil rigs as artificial reefs/habitats.

Emerging as a Leader

by Glenn Francisco, MESA Student, Electrical Engineering

I am very excited and humbled to be selected for the MESA Newsletter. Looking back in recent years, I would tell everyone I wanted to pursue a degree in Computer Engineering. Although, I only knew some basics of what the major entailed, and the more I learned about the major, the more I knew this major wasn't for me. When I was debating about a major change, it was a difficult decision to make because I enjoy working with computers, coding, and seeing how different components function together. Ultimately, I ended up changing my major to Electrical Engineering. The MESA/STEM program at Allan Hancock was very welcoming and supportive of my educational career goals.

During high school and college career, I participated in many sports and extracurricular activities that taught me the definition of teamwork and allowed me to practice leadership skills. I was involved in football, basketball, and water polo. Teamwork was the cornerstone to the success of the team. As the Junior Varsity Water Polo Captain, I fine-tuned my leadership skills in teamwork, communication, planning, and problem solving which helped lead the team to take third place in the league. As the stage manager, I orchestrated all the lighting cues necessary to set the mood for various scenes.

I am also part of the STEM and Engineering Club at Allan Hancock where we do outreach programs explaining how the STEM and Engineering course are at school. MESA is an academic program that provides a wide range of support services and activities aimed at fostering student achievement and increasing the success and participation they experience while pursuing a degree in the STEM field. During my time with MESA, I was given the tools to become confident and succeed in pursuant of my educational goals. My educational experience I have gained through these programs will be the foundation of my success. I have been accepted for admission to San Francisco and San Jose State University in the Fall of 2020 in their engineering program.



Rising to Meet New Challenges

by Bryce Kazumi Miyahara, Coordinator, STEM Learning Laboratory



My plans for college did not materialize for the first time until I met with my high school counselor during the second-half of 12th grade. At the time, I had just recently fallen in love with Chemistry. My performance in Chemistry classes was strong, and I enjoyed the pace at which I gained new information about the atomic realm. Fascinating over how various equations and models could explain how energy transforms at nanosecond speeds, I knew it was a subject I could devote years of study to and still only scratch the very surface of it. However, my elders advised me to major in a “specialized category of Chemistry,” which helped me to narrow down my choices to either Chemical Engineering or Biochemistry. To my 12th grade mind, this choice represented a simple question: “Do I prefer Physics courses (choosing Chemical Engineering), or do I prefer Biology courses (choosing Biochemistry)?” And the answer was just as simply, “Biology.”

Deciding on a major was only my first step. After reviewing <https://assist.org/> with my counselor, I decided to attend Cuesta College in the Fall semester following my high school graduation so that I could take advantage of their Promise Scholarship. Even though I was pursuing a degree that I loved, I still stumbled from time to time; and this helped me to realize that college was yet another place of growth, not a place of perfection. I overcame my weaknesses in writing, I expanded my attention to detail, I grew more confident in my ability to teach others, and perhaps most importantly, I came to better understand my limits and how to push them.

My own personal growth was proportional to the growth of the challenges I perceived around me. I knew that I would have to work part-time while maintaining a full-time school schedule that would periodically change, so I applied to jobs with flexible schedules. I knew I would have to pay rent and live with roommates after I transferred, so to prepare myself, I rented an apartment in San Luis Obispo with some friends from high school. I was close to home, but I needed to make a transition period for myself where I could balance what was familiar, and what was unfamiliar.

Of course, I continued to grow after I transferred to UC Davis. It was here that I made the most use of various academic resources. Practice exams, quiet-study halls, weekly course review sessions, lecture recordings, office hours; school had moved far beyond the timeframe of lecture hours, and it required dedicated mental focus in-class and out-of-class. But at the same time, I looked inward and found a craving for spiritual focus, leading me to convert to Islam and undertake a minor in Religious Studies (an accomplishment I’m proud to feature on my diploma). I had stuck to a single academic plan for years, and I knew that I was ready to take on more responsibility. I was fortunate enough to hear about Allan Hancock’s immediate need for a STEM Learning Lab Coordinator, the position I currently occupy. In truth, it has been the most engaging and most fulfilling challenge of them all. Being able to give back to the students and faculty who are walking a path so similar to my own has been an eye-opening and enriching experience.



Throughout my years of education, I have been a cougar, a panther, an eagle, another cougar, and an aggie (still not entirely sure what that is), but who knew I would be most happy as a bulldog?

What is an Internship

- An internship is a professional learning experience
- Offers meaningful, practical work related to a student's field of study or career interest
- Provides a student the opportunity for career exploration and development, and to learn new skills
- It offers the employer the opportunity to bring new ideas and energy into the workplace, develop talent and potentially build a pipeline for future full-time employees
- Emphasis on learning and professional development, which may involve guidance of a mentor figure
- Can be paid or non-paid and have full-time or part-time hours
- Internships are available to students at all levels, from freshman to graduate

STEP 1: Research and Explore

- Begin searching early (start in the fall) – ongoing basis
- Visit the Job Placement and Career Center
- Search the web
- Contact potential organizations/ companies (cold calling)
- Talk to your instructors and peers
- Take note of opportunities you can get in the future
- School announcements, MESA/STEM emails, and website

<http://www.hancockcollege.edu/stem/internships/>

STEP 2: Develop your Application

- Read the internship description carefully, this is your road map
- Tailor your material to what the internship is looking for base on their description

Application

- Read directions carefully
- Complete the application in its entirety

RESUME

- Create a resume that targets the internship you are applying for
- Allow enough time to receive feedback
- Include previous experience such as projects, volunteer work, school involvement, special qualities, etc.

STEP 3: Interview Preparation

Physical Preparation

- Get plenty of rest
- Dress for success

Situational Knowledge

- Where/when interview takes place
- Arrive 10 minutes early!
- Practice Run

Mental Preparation

- Knowledge of company (research)
- Practice a mock interview

Written Preparation

- Take extra resumes, references, etc.
- Make notes
- Ask questions

STEP 4: Becoming a GREAT Intern

- Become familiar with the company/ organization prior to starting the internship
- Positivity and commitment
- Open to learning
- Flexible
- Treat the internship like a job
- Work hard



My Goal of Becoming an Architectural Engineer

by Gillianne Reizi F. Soriano, MESA Student, Architecture Engineering



My name is Gillianne Reizi F. Soriano. I am finishing up my sophomore year and going to my junior year at Allan Hancock College. I was born and raised in the Philippines until I was 11 years old. I have been living here at Santa Maria for about nine and half years with my family. I graduated from Pioneer Valley High School on 2018 with a GPA of 4.0 and rank 21 out of 621 in my class. I am a full-time student and have taken summer classes and a winter class in 2020 at Allan Hancock College. Currently, I have a cumulative current grade point average of 3.55 and a spot on the Dean's list on fall of 2018.

When I was still in high school, I was determined to earn a degree majoring in Engineering. However, I was still not sure which branch I was going to choose. During my junior year in high school in my art class, my team and I were assigned to build a model house as a project, and I enjoyed it very much. So, I decided Architectural Engineering would be the right degree program for me.

When I started at Hancock, I instantly signed up for the MESA program after hearing about it from one of my instructors. I was a member of the architecture club called the American Institute for Architecture Students (AIAS) in fall 2018 to Spring 2019.

My goal at Allan Hancock is to complete all my required classes and graduate with a cumulative GPA of at least 3.5 because I would like to transfer to California Polytechnic State University in San Luis Obispo. As of right now, I am not working as

I plan to fully dedicate my attention in my academics and pass all my classes, preferably with an A or at least a B. So, this summer of 2020, I plan on taking two classes again instead of working. As an Architectural Engineering major, I would like to maintain, or better yet, improve, my grade point average in order to increase my chances of being accepted into Cal Poly which has a lot of competitive applicants. The reason I want to attend Cal Poly at San Luis Obispo is because it is close to my home, and it is very well-known engineering university which I would like to graduate from there. As of right now, I would like to find out more about jobs in the field of architecture and engineering that may strike my interest.

Spring 2020 MESA/STEM Activities

Feb 7 —Financial Aid and Scholarship Workshop (1:00pm-2:00pm; W-23)

Feb 21—Internships Opportunities & Strategies Workshop (1:00pm-2:00pm; W-23)

March 6—Recognizing and Managing Burnout (1:00pm-2:00pm; W-23)

March 18-19—UC Los Angeles/California Science Center: Contact MESA ext. 3446 for sign ups **POSTPONED**

April 3-5—MESA Leadership Conference at Happy Valley Santa Cruz **CANCELLED**

April 17—You're Outta Here Workshop* (1:00pm-2:00pm; W-31) **WEBINAR**

May 15—MESA/STEM Student Recognition Reception. **POSTPONED**

May 13—You're Outta Here Workshop* (5:00pm-6:00pm; W-31) **WEBINAR**

*For students who are planning on transferring Fall 2020 & want to know all of the next steps to successfully transition from AHC to the four-year university, don't miss this workshop! Mandatory attendance of one session for MESA Fall 2020 transfer students.

Understanding the Syllabus

from: <https://www.universitysurvival.com/student-topics/understanding-the-syllabus/>

A syllabus will be given to you for each class that you are enrolled in. In effect, the syllabus is a contract between you and your professor. The grading system in the course will be exactly what is spelled out in the syllabus. It is important to know what the grading systems are so you know where you stand in your classes and what you have to do to get the grade you want in your classes. The syllabus is a guide to being a successful student in all your courses. It will help you organize when homework, quizzes, and exams are so you can allow yourself enough time to get it all done. It also contains a policy statement on absence.



While the syllabus is a very important tool for the class it can often contain misprints and errors. The best way to deal with these possible errors is by reading it and fully understanding it, and then contacting the teacher if you are still unclear. Additionally, the syllabus will give you the office location of the teacher and the hours that he\she will be in the office. It will give you an idea about other course policy or the department policy and the roll of cheating or welcome aid that encourage students to come and ask about what they do not know.

When students don't do well in a class, it's generally because they failed to understand what was required in the syllabus. If you can understand the syllabus fully, you can better understand your grade. Sometimes just by looking at and understanding the syllabus, you'll realize that your grade isn't as bad as it seems. Here are some things to look for in the syllabus:

- Attendance policy – Understanding this policy is key, because you can lose points on your overall grade depending on your attendance.
- Grading system – Each class will have different components for a grade (e.g. tests, final, homework, labs, projects, attendance). Bonus point opportunities will be described.
- Test dates – Some teachers don't let you retake tests, so it's critical that you record these.
- Homework practices – You will need to know the grading policy on homework as well as policies on due dates.
- Lab – If you have a course with a lab, the lab information may be specified in the lecture's syllabus or the lab may contain its own syllabus.

One of the first things you should do each semester is to review what is in the syllabus and develop a system to track your grades. A calendar or a planner are two great methods of writing down what needs to be done so you can see it in advance.

The Mathematics, Engineering, Science Achievement (MESA)

Program is an academic program that provides a wide range of support services and activities aimed at fostering student achievement and increasing the success and participation they experience while pursuing a degree in mathematics, engineering, computer science, biology, architecture, kinesiology, or other science-based programs. MESA enables students to prepare for and graduate from a four-year university with a math-based degree. It also seeks to increase the diverse pool of transfer-ready community college students who are prepared to excel as math, engineering and science majors. Through the program, students develop academic and leadership skills, increase educational performance, and gain confidence in their abilities to compete academically and professionally.



Visit our website at www.hancockcollege.edu; click on MESA under Quick Links

