MESA Students Developing Leadership Skills
by Christine Reed, MESA Counselor/Coordinator

Every April, MESA students from across California are given the opportunity to attend an annual MESA Student Leadership Conference, sponsored by Pacific Gas & Electric. Our college’s MESA Program is no exception. We send as many students as we can afford to experience this invaluable learning opportunity. Six of our outstanding students were able to attend last April and developed career strategies through skill-building workshops, interacted with technical professionals, and participated in personalized mock interviews during the three-day conference.

The conference goal is to better prepare MESA students for the professional workforce. Students also obtain information about research and graduate studies, transfer options and student organizations. When students aren’t working in groups at workshops or holding mock interviews, they hear from industry and education leaders about the state of the science, technology, engineering and math workforce.

One of the primary goals of the AHC MESA Program is to develop the leadership skills and confidence levels of its students. These types of conferences are a vital component of the program’s curriculum. Year after year, we witness our students returning grateful for the opportunity and enthusiastic about putting their new-found skills and belief in themselves to work. These skills play a key role in how they approach their coursework, internships, and extracurricular activities. It is a joy to watch our students develop and grow every day as they take each semester one-by-one and challenge themselves to stretch beyond what they thought themselves capable.
Shooting for the Stars
by Alber Douglawi, Aerospace Engineering

Hi! I am Alber Douglawi. I am majoring in Aerospace Engineering and I intend to transfer in fall 2013 to Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo. My family immigrated to this country from Syria when I was about 9 years old. My main obstacle was to overcome the language barrier. Although it made school very difficult at first, overcoming this barrier taught me to not give up and to work hard. My parents were also very encouraging and taught me the importance of education. I believe that they are the main reason that I am where I am today: in my last year at AHC with a 4.0 GPA.

The reason that I chose Aerospace Engineering as a major is because I became interested early on in space exploration. When I learned about the achievements of organizations like NASA, I was fascinated and wanted to become a part of it. What I found to be most amazing is the fact that human beings were able to figure out how to reach another body in space, something that would have seemed fictional only a couple of centuries ago. After deciding that this is what I wanted to do, it became clear that Aerospace Engineering is the best path to take to get there. When I began at Hancock, I joined the MESA program because I was advised to do so by my brother who was also a MESA student. This was by far the best academic decision I have ever made. The MESA program has been extremely helpful to me in many ways over the past two years. I have learned how to find and apply for internships and scholarships through the workshops that are offered. The MESA center is also a great place to study because it gives access to so many resources. However the best part about MESA is being surrounded by so many intelligent, like-minded individuals. Since we are all going through similar experiences, we are comfortable working together and know how to help each other. I would recommend joining MESA to anyone who is eligible.

Techniques to Stop Procrastination
Assess your attitude and motivation - Our attitude can greatly influence the outcome of our efforts, and it might be time for an adjustment if success is what you seek.
Admit the problem – This is a primary step in overcoming a problem, and procrastination is an issue. Failure to recognize that you have a problem makes it almost impossible to correct the situation.
Analyze the causes and monitor – Evaluate your reasons for procrastinating and make a commitment to change. Monitor yourself and hold yourself accountable. Make sure to employ techniques.
Realize the consequences – Think about the long-term and short-term consequences of postponing important activities, and be aware of those consequences. Envision them in your mind and body. How do you feel?
Subdivide into smaller parts – Reach your academic goals class by class, day by day, step by step, week by week, etc. This strategy is very effective in making the goal/project/assignment seem achievable and not overwhelming.
Set goals/make a plan - Without goals and/or a plan you are just “hanging out” on campus or in a class. You’ve got to develop your road map for everything in order to reach completion.
Tackle your toughest task/course first – If you conquer your most difficult course/project, your fears will not spread to others, and the problem will not grow bigger…it will begin to shrink.
Visualize completion and success/picture the benefits – Picture in your mind the great feeling you will have upon completing your goal/plan. Picture the rewards and benefits you will have earned and will be able to give yourself. This is a very powerful technique.

Reed’s Five Fabulous Traits of a Successful Transfer Student (& what universities are looking for) ~

1. Takes Responsibility vs. Plays the Victim
2. Operates Proactively vs. Reactively
3. Contributes vs. Consumes
4. Follows Through vs. flakes out
5. Is Team-Oriented vs. Self-Focused
The Social Side of MESA
by Alyssa Zuniga, MESA Club President

The MESA Club provides its members with many useful skills to use in the future. Learning to work as a team, manage time, take responsibility and be dependable are several of these characteristics that club members develop during their time in the MESA Club. One of the components of the club that helps develop these skills is the events that the members plan and execute themselves. These include fund raising, which we use to provide our members with scholarship awards at the end of the year; social events, which bring the club members closer together; and community service events that ensure the MESA Club gives back to the community.

This year the MESA Club has several exciting events planned for its members and other Hancock College students. Our first Halloween bake sale will be held October 31, 2012. We will also be taking a trip to the Avila Barn as a social event to take advantage of the fun fall events there. Other upcoming events for the year are a tri-tip barbecue, an end-of-the-year opportunity drawing, a “field day,” and several others to be planned.

Through these events and activities the MESA Club members work together to raise their own scholarship money, help the surrounding community, and have fun together.

Following Her Passion
by Sarai Zavala, Animal Science

Throughout my life I have had a difficult time figuring out who I am or what I want to accomplish in my life. Growing up in a Mexican culture, my parents always advised that I search for a major that would benefit me economically in the future. I have seen the struggles they go through and I understand why they would urge my siblings and me to proceed in a career that would give us economical safety.

Coming into college I chose to be a Mechanical Engineering major because it is a well-known major for high earning potential. In my Engineering 100 class a quote that really stood out to me was “Look to your right, look to your left. Two of three of you won’t be here at graduation.” When I first read this quote I told myself that I was going to be that one person who made it to graduation, but after sometime I noticed that I was enjoying school and life less and less. I dreaded each morning and I felt unhappy most of the time. I didn’t know what I wanted to accomplish in the major and I realized I really didn’t like it.

That’s when I decided to change my major to Animal Science. I want to be a veterinarian and focus on livestock. As a small girl I loved to be outdoors, loved to be near animals especially horses and I’ve always had the dream of having a ranch of my own with many, many horses. Over time, I pushed that side of me away, but now I feel like I found myself again and I am ready to embrace it. Coming to school now seems right again and I know I will make it through because I will enjoy what I do.

Once I changed majors I felt like a new person. I am now excited to wake up each morning to know I am finally doing something I want in my life. Being part of the MESA program has definitely given me confidence and the support that I need as a student. MESA is not only a support, but a helping hand, a family, a group of people with ambition and the passion to get to where they want to go, and I am definitely proud and honored to be part of this program. I know I could have not come this far without the help of everyone around me.
Tip for Effective Study and Learning

- Assess your motivation levels to study
- Make a study schedule
- Select a place to study that is quiet
- Gather materials and resources for study ahead of time
- Attend class and learn actively
- Take notes
- Develop concentration and avoid distraction
- Study wisely (use study groups)
- Be honest about learning difficulties and seek help (tutoring)
- Know exactly what is expected from you in your courses
- Make studying a priority, make the effort, and have a positive attitude
- Start early on assignments and develop a strategy to complete them
- Look for relevance and application in your courses
- Be prepared before class
- Keep anxiety under control
- Follow your study sessions with a little reward
- Cultivate a strong belief in yourself and your abilities

The Key of Success is Education

by Lucio Casiano, Biology (pre-med)

Continuing my education has been one of the most important things that I am proud of because every obstacle that I have encountered has helped me be the person who I am now: a person who seeks a career in biology and medicine. At age 12, I migrated to the United States with my mother seeking a better life. I had a hard time getting used to this culture because it was different from mine, especially the language. I worked very hard and with the help of many professors I was able to learn this language very quickly. At age 15 I became interested in biology because I saw biology as a world of mysteries, a world that I wanted to explore. What interested me about biology is how biology allows us to understand the way of life.

I remember in my senior year of high school I dreamed of being able to go to college, but I could not afford it. I did not know if I wanted to continue or quit and start working. One of my English teachers told me that I should never give up or leave school because getting an education will mean something in my life. She motivated me and guided me to make good decisions by seeking help. From that point, I began to work very hard; I began to believe that I could still go to college, I just needed some guidance.

When I enrolled at AHC, I joined many clubs so I could interact with other students since I was shy. One of my math instructors, Mrs. Wong, asked me what my major I was and I told her I was a biology major. She told me about the MESA Program and advised me to sign up, but I never did because I was so shy. One day she told me that she was going to take me there and she did. I am very grateful to Mrs. Wong because without her advice I would not be in MESA now. The MESA Program has helped and guided me to follow the right path toward my major by taking the right courses. Without MESA mentors I would not be ready to move on to the next level of my education. My future plan is to transfer to UCSB or UC Davis to obtain my bachelor’s degree in biological science then continue with my greatest goal of becoming a hand surgeon.
AHC MESA Student Wins Regional Math Award

Nearly 200 students from 21 community colleges competed in the Mathematics, Engineering, Science Achievement (MESA) program’s third annual Math Challenge and it was Allan Hancock College student German Morales who took the top place.

“German is a wonderful student and we are so pleased to have him represent the college’s MESA program,” said Christine Reed, Hancock’s MESA counselor/coordinator. “We are so proud of him and know he has a bright future ahead.”

Morales said he was surprised to get the top score because his thoughts were on another test waiting for him in one of his classes that same afternoon. Focusing on academics has paid off for Morales, who recently transferred as a mechanical engineering major at University of California, Davis.

“Everything I’ve experienced in MESA has been great so far. They’ve really put me on track to go to a four-year university,” Morales said.

Seven Hancock students took part in the Math Challenge, which was held in the MESA Center on the Santa Maria campus on March 21. The 60-minute test was modeled after the American Mathematical Association’s Student Math League test and was sponsored by the CPA and business consulting firm, Vasquez & Company LLP, who provided professionals to assist with grading the tests.

“The Math Challenge allows students to gain recognition for their problem solving skills and helps alleviate the stress that often comes with test preparation,” said Tiffany Reardon, who oversees the MESA Community College Program.

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, agriculture, architecture, kinesiology, nursing 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 professionally.

"MESA sets high standards while providing the academic tools needed for helping students to succeed. This deceptively simple approach is effective and has produced remarkable results."

Henry T. Yang, Chancellor, UC Santa Barbara

Visit our website at www.hancockcollege.edu; click on MESA under Quick Links
STEM/MESA/Bridges Activities, Fall 2012

- Sept. 6, 2012 — STEM: TAG! You’re In (12:45-1:45; STEM Center, N-Annex 108)
- Sept. 13, 2012 — Qualities of a Highly Effective Transfer Student (12:45-1:45pm; M-211)
- Sept. 18, 2012 — Introduction to STEM Transfer (12:45-1:45 pm; M-211)
- Sept. 19, 2012 — STEM CENTER Grand Opening & Open House! (10:00 am - 3:00 pm; N-Annex 108)
- Sept. 19, 2012 — CSU Northridge Transfer Information Session (3:00-4:00 pm; STEM Center, N-Annex 108)
- Sept. 20, 2012 — STEM: TAG! You’re In (12:45-1:45 pm; STEM Center, N-Annex 108)
- Sept. 27, 2012 — Developing Successful STEM Study Skills (12:45-1:45pm; M-211)
- Oct. 5-7, 2012 — AMSA UCD Pre-Medical & Health Professions National Conference (University of California Davis).
- Oct. 18, 2012 — STEM Scholarship Exploration (12:45-1:45pm; M-211)
- Oct. 25, 2012 — Landing a STEM Internship! (12:45-1:45 pm; M-211)
- Nov. 2, 2012 — Bridges to the Baccalaureate Fall Symposium (1:00 pm - 3:00 pm; M-310)
- Nov. 8, 2012 — Writing Competitive College Admissions Essays for STEM Majors (12:45-1:45pm; M-211)
- Nov. 29, 2012 — Managing Stress; finals are coming! (12:45-1:45pm; M-211)
- Nov 30, 2012 — UC Santa Cruz Campus Exploration Trip! For more information, please contact Dorine Mathieu at ext. 3446
- Dec. 8, 2012 — Balloon Festival. For more information, please contact Siboney Guardado at ext. 3930
- Dec. 13, 2012 — STEM Student & Staff Winter Celebration! We made it through another semester, please join us to celebrate the joy of the winter season! (1:00-3:00 pm; STEM Center, N-Annex 108)

CSU/UC Application Workshops
- Oct. 4, 2012 — CSU Application Workshop (12:45-1:45; W-18)
- Oct. 9, 2012 — CSU Application Workshop (12:45-1:45 pm; W-18)
- Oct. 17, 2012 — CSU Application Workshop (6:00-7:00 pm; W-31)
- Oct. 23, 2012 — CSU Application Workshop (12:45-1:45 pm; W-18)
- Oct. 29, 2012 — CSU Application Workshop (9:30-10:30 am; G-106A)
- Nov. 1, 2012 — UC/CSU Application Workshop (12:45-2:15 pm; W-18)
- Nov. 7, 2012 — UC/CSU Application Workshop (6:00-7:30 pm; W-31)
- Nov. 15, 2012 — UC/CSU Application Workshop (12:45-2:15 pm; W-18)
- Nov. 20, 2012 — UC/CSU Application Workshop (12:45-2:15 pm; W-18)
- Nov. 26 2012 — UC/CSU Application Workshop (9:30-11 am; G-106A)

STEM Center; Monday-Thursday 8:30 am- 6:30 pm & Friday 8:30 am- 4:00 pm; N-Annex 108

MESA Center; Monday-Wednesday 9:00 am- 6:00 pm; Thursday 9:00 am– 5:00 pm & Friday 9:00 am- 2:00 pm: W21

Bridges to the Baccalaureate: STEM Center (N-Annex 108)