



MESA®

Math · Engineering · Science
Achievement

THE PURSUIT OF KNOWLEDGE

WHAT IS MESA?

Mathematics, Engineering, Science Achievement (MESA) builds a pathway to college and careers in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) fields. MESA develops programming and initiatives to improve diversity and retention in STEM fields, with an emphasis on traditionally socially or economically disadvantaged groups.

Our program strives to provide student support services through industry involvement, professional development, and networking.



SACRAMENTO STATE

MESA students posed in front of a cultural mural at Sac State.



THE MESA EXPERIENCE

DANIELA CEJA

In high school, a majority of students are unsure of what career they want to pursue after their 4 years are up. I was part of that majority. At first, I wanted to be a lawyer but realized I wasn't the best at English and public speaking. Then I wanted to be an accountant but realized I did not enjoy math THAT much. Throughout my 4 years, I was in a limbo of uncertainty with no clear idea of what I wanted to do. That was until my junior and senior year when I began to take advanced biology classes which

peaked my interest. I found a subject I enjoyed and excelled in. I felt like I had finally found something I was passionate about and I decided to run with it!

Although I had found my passion, I still was unsure of what career I wanted to pursue. I found out I liked the sciences, but that is still a wide spectrum of subjects like chemistry, physics, and mathematics. I once again was at a crossroads and I did not know what path to take. Instead of closing myself off to a variety of options, I decided to take a variety of paths. I took a wide spectrum of classes at West Hills which allowed me to find the subjects I excelled at and enjoyed the most. I took up a certified nursing assistant program one summer and it led to me working currently as one in a skilled nursing facility. I also became a chemistry tutor and lab assistant for the chemistry classes on campus. Taking advantage of all these opportunities allowed me to narrow down my options for the career I wanted to pursue.

I am now part of the graduating class of West Hills College Coalinga 2023 and am transferring to Fresno State to pursue my bachelor's degree in Biochemistry while working in their research department. My goal is to become a pediatric oncologist, a doctor that specializes in the treatment of cancer in children. While my path may be full of ups and downs, with loop after loop, I know that I will reach the end. Life is the scariest rollercoaster of them all, and I plan on having as much fun as I can while I'm on it.

THE MESA EXPERIENCE

MAURICIO CALDERA

During high school, I learned about chemistry and general biology. Their close connections in how they work hand in hand sparked my curiosity. My passion for chemistry and biology continued but I had no clear pathway. During college, I chose biochemistry as my major, since it combines multiple aspects and allows me to keep optional routes available.

Before I decided on my major, I began attending West Hills College Coalinga,

during a time of uncertainty – the COVID lockdown. My first year was strictly online, except for specific laboratories/experiments.

My second college year was similar but, fortunately, the lockdown had been lifted which allowed me access to a better studying environment and the opportunity to meet individuals. The MESA lab and the library provided a quiet learning/study area. I was on campus for long periods of time; it felt as if I lived on campus. Though I struggled, and continue to, I learned outside of lectures and took new opportunities when they came. My time at West Hills College Coalinga has been great, with ups and downs. I am thankful for all the individuals who supported me. Thank you, Dr. Kenneth Henry, Pedro Garcia, Zach Soto, Dr. El Nagggar, Rodolfo Rodriguez, Mark Matteson, Alex Perez, Emma Santos, and many more.

In Spring 2023, I will be graduating from WHCC. While my journey at WHCC ends, another one starts. As I write this bio, I am deciding which four-year university to attend: UC Davis or Fresno State. My major, regardless of which university I attend, is biochemistry. After my bachelor's, I will be applying to graduate programs or medical school.





OUR LATEST FIELD TRIP

WE ABSOLUTELY LOVED VISITING UC DAVIS!

MESA students had a great time exploring the UC Davis campus and learning about all the opportunities and programs UC Davis has to offer.

MEET WHCC STEM FACULTY

THIS IS ZACH SOTO, OUR MESA DIRECTOR!

Zach graduated from Coalinga High School in 1993 and earned his masters in sociology from Arizona State University in 2018. He has been the MESA Program Director at West Hills College Coalinga for past six years, and has been at WHCC since 2009. Zach is passionate about working with underserved, first-generation students.



CONTACT US TODAY

HAVE ANY QUESTIONS ABOUT OUR PROGRAM?

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