



NEWS

El Camino College | Public Relations & Marketing Department
16007 Crenshaw Blvd., Torrance, CA 90506
Contact: Ann M. Garten, Director, Community Relations
Telephone: (310) 660-3406 | E-Mail: agarten@elcamino.edu

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Student Success: El Camino College Grad Transfers to UC Berkeley; Finds Success in Study Abroad Program

Tracey Amaya's success as a college student can be attributed to plenty of studying, hard work, and most especially – planning.

Amaya's detailed planning and organizational skills helped her earn an associate degree at ECC in 2011 and then transfer to the University of California at Berkeley where she is continuing her studies in sociology. On top of that, she also spent a semester in a Barbados study abroad program this past fall. She returned from the islands in time to celebrate the New Year with her family and said the experience was incredible – from meeting people in the community to studying under palm trees on a warm beach.

"I really wanted to study abroad, so I planned my whole schedule around this opportunity," she said. "I was considering either taking on a minor or joining study abroad. I did a lot of research and went to workshops and meetings; in the end decided that study abroad would be a good choice because it is a great way to grow school-wise, and also as a person. As a transfer student, I found that you have to really think about what you want to do and plan so that you can work it all in."

When Amaya first enrolled at El Camino College after graduating from high school, she admits she felt a little confused. She had determination and goals but she didn't know where to start.

"That first semester I was a bit lost and then I met with a counselor who explained different programs I could join," she said. "Soon, I was part of the First Year Experience, which guided me toward meeting my goals. I always tell everyone that the people I met at El Camino College have been so important to helping me get to where I am now."

When on break from UC Berkeley, Amaya comes back to ECC to talk to current students, while sharing her experiences in higher education.

"I think it is the responsibly of the student to find out the information they will need to do well, and at El Camino College there are also plenty of faculty and staff who can help," she said. "When I come and meet with students, I want to help them and encourage them to push themselves a little further than they normally would."

At UC Berkeley, Amaya said ECC prepared her well for the academic challenges ahead. While at ECC, she was a member of the Transfer Alliance Project, which included support services and visits to Berkeley. Amaya also landed a spot in the UC Berkeley Summer Enrichment Program, where she stayed at the Berkeley campus for six weeks as a visiting student and became acquainted with the university and its academic offerings.

Amaya plans to graduate with her bachelor's degree in spring 2013 and might even stay in the Bay Area to pursue a career in social work. A master's degree is also part of her meticulous plans.

"I love it at Berkeley," she said. "I can see myself living there after graduation. I know that with hard work, and more planning, I will meet my goals."

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