



# NEWS

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*Photo Available Upon Request*

## **Successful El Camino College Sisters Transfer to the University of California** *Current ECC students can find transfer assistance at upcoming Fall Transfer Fair*

As the little sister, Marimar Arango often follows the path set by her responsible big sister, Kayla. It has worked out so far: Kayla led the way to El Camino College, where both sisters had a successful academic career and earned associate degrees.

When it was time to transfer to a university, however, each sister chose a different direction: Kayla transferred to UCLA in 2014 and Marimar entered UC Berkeley in August. Despite the universities being longtime rivals, Kayla is not too concerned about a potential Golden Bears/Bruins conflict.

“I don’t think there will be any rivalry between us, we are both advocates for higher education,” said Kayla, who is majoring in international development studies at UCLA, with a minor in Latin American studies, and plans to graduate in 2016. “I am happy that we both have the opportunity to be at the two best public universities in the country. Besides, we are both ECC Warriors at heart!”

El Camino College regularly ranks in the top 10 in the state in sending students to the University of California and California State University systems. To help students navigate the transfer process, the college will present its annual **Fall Transfer Day Fair** from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. September 29 on the Library Lawn.

The Fall Transfer Day Fair is the largest transfer fair of the year, featuring representatives from colleges and universities, including out-of-state campuses, as well as private colleges/universities and historically black colleges/universities. Representatives from the UC and CSU systems will also be available.

Kayla and Marimar Aranga managed a successful transfer to the UC campuses with the help of El Camino College faculty and staff along the way.

The sisters moved to the South Bay with their mother 10 years ago from Colombia, where they were born and raised. They graduated from Redondo Union High School – Kayla in 2009 and Marimar in 2012 – then they both chose to continue their education at El Camino College. Kayla graduated from ECC in 2013, Marimar graduated in 2015.

The Torrance-area campus wasn’t Kayla’s first stop, however. As the first in her family to attend college, she was not aware of ECC’s registration process, so she missed the deadlines and enrolled at another community college. It was a good start, but too far from home and work via the public bus. She made her way back to El Camino College and found that it was

just what she needed.

“ECC was a second home for me,” she said. “I met some of the most amazing people there. My counselors and professors love their jobs and care about their students, and they inspired me to push myself academically. They also guided me through the transfer process. If it was not for the support and guidance that I received from people at ECC, I would be a different person.”

Marimar followed her sister’s advice and enrolled in ECC immediately after high school. She is confident she made the right choice.

“I didn’t think I would grow as much as a student and as a person as I did in these years at El Camino College,” said Marimar, who is majoring in Latin American studies with a minor in women’s studies at UC Berkeley.

“In the last few years I became really aware of social problems and how I can help my community. El Camino College helped me find my passion of what I want to do for my future, with the help of counselors and professors and other people I encountered. Also, as an ECC Ambassador, I had a chance to help others – students like me. Now I know this is what I want to do with my life.”

One of the keys to the sisters’ success was financial aid and other support they found at ECC.

“When I graduated from high school, there was absolutely no financial aid available to me then,” Kayla said. “I had to take two classes per semester because it was all that my mom and I could afford.

“My sister and I came to the U.S. without documents, and we lived without them for nine years. After the California Dream Act passed in 2011 my tuition costs were waived. This really changed my experiences as a student and as a human being. I became a full-time student. I could work less. The Dream Act really allowed me to realize my potential because I had more time to dedicate to school. I also became involved with extracurricular activities at ECC and in my community. My mother has been a single mother for most of our lives – there is no way that my sister and I could afford UCLA or UC Berkeley without financial aid.”

For Marimar, financial aid and being a part of ECC’s Puente Project (a program that supports transfer students) contributed to her success.

“Puente really made a difference in my life,” she said. “In high school I didn’t really know how to write an essay, and I needed a lot of other study skills. Puente taught me to be a good student and a good writer, basically the skills I needed to be successful in college. This is something I will take with me to Berkeley. I learned so much.”

***For more information about the Transfer Fair, contact the El Camino College Transfer Center at 310-660-3593, Ext. 3408 or go to [www.elcamino.edu](http://www.elcamino.edu).***

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