



NEWS

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ECC Student Enhancement Team Reaches out to Area High Schools

Hawthorne High School student Alan Biambella credits the success in his math classes with the tutoring he receives from El Camino College's Student Enhancement Team (SET) members at the Hawthorne Teen Center.

If Alan doesn't understand a difficult mathematical concept, tutors like ECC graduate Adriana Hernandez will go through the assignment and help out with homework until she's sure he understands.

"If I'm having a little trouble, she'll go through equations step-by-step," said Alan, who plans to study engineering in college. "It really helps a lot."

Students excelling in math or science coursework at El Camino College have the opportunity to join the Student Enhancement Team. Members of the SET program go into area schools and community organizations to provide tutoring to high school students working on science, technology, engineering or math, or STEM subjects. The program is supported by a Hispanic Serving Institution STEM Grant from the U.S. Department of Education and is designed to be a bridge between high school and El Camino College.

ECC tutors work with students either in small groups or in one-on-one sessions. The El Camino College SET program began in 2010 in two South Bay high schools, and now serves thousands of students in dozens of South Bay schools.

"This program is so important for high school and college students alike," said Josefina Bedolla, El Camino College's SET program coordinator.

"SET tutors are role models for the high school students; they can ask tutors questions about college life, which helps them feel more comfortable and confident about pursuing higher education. SET is making a difference not only by providing tutoring services to high school students, but more importantly, motivating them to keep moving forward with their education."

Gloria Garcia, coordinator of the SET program in the Hawthorne Teen Center, said she has about 20 high school students who regularly use the tutoring in her facility. Having students from El Camino College at the teen center to help students can show high schooler students a path to higher education, she said.

Hernandez, who transferred to California State University, Long Beach after El Camino College and earned a degree in microbiology, said her students aren't just seeking answers about their math homework. Many students also quiz her about her path to getting her degree.

"They're planning to go to college themselves, and like to know about college life," Hernandez said.

Hernandez said her work tutoring students doesn't just feel like a help to the community; teaching helps cement many concepts in her own knowledge.

"As I'm teaching them, I can reinforce my own understanding," Hernandez said. "It is really valuable for me."

For more information about the SET program, view www.elcamino.edu/academics/stem/set.asp.

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