



NEWS

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El Camino College Student Finds Success through MESA; Plans to Transfer in the Fall

Khris Thorne likes to say he's had a class in almost every building at El Camino College. Because of various improvement projects from the 2002 Measure E facilities bond, the aerospace engineering major has been routed to different classrooms away from the usual science buildings, and that has made his college experience all the more interesting.

"I really got to know the campus in the past few years, and I have met so many new people," said Khris, who will graduate with ECC's Class of 2014 on May 16. "El Camino College has been great place to begin my college education. I feel ready for university-level classes. All my professors are wonderful and these classes are probably harder than what I will see at my four-year school."

After countless study sessions and hours buried in books, Khris' hard work has paid off. He is a member of the ECC Mathematics, Engineering, Science Achievement (MESA) and Student Support Services for Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (SSS-STEM) Programs and has been awarded the NSF ASEMS Scholarship for the past two years. This scholarship provides \$4,000 each year for fees, books and other school expenses for continuing students and \$7,000 for transfer students. Although he hasn't decided which university he will transfer to this fall, he will be honored as an outstanding transfer student at the May 8 El Camino College MESA/SSS-STEM Awards.

MESA and SSS-STEM programs provide support to community college students who are majoring in math or science so they excel academically and transfer to four-year institutions. At the upcoming MESA and SSS-STEM Awards, Khris will be one of about 100 MESA and SSS-STEM transfer students recognized for transfer achievements. In addition, NSF ASEMS Scholarship recipients for the 2014-2015 academic year will be recognized for winning this prestigious financial award. This spring MESA will award a total of \$134,000 in scholarships to about 30 students.

"These scholarships are so important to me – they help a lot," Khris said. "It means that I don't have to worry about that part of college. And my mom doesn't have to stress about money; she doesn't have to worry about me anymore. I remember my first semester at El Camino College, before the scholarships, it was so stressful just buying books."

MESA also provided Khris the opportunity to participate in an invitation-only conference in San Diego for math-based majors this academic year. He was one of six ECC students to attend the 10th annual MESA Student Leadership Conference, which offered extensive professional and leadership

development through direct interaction with industry mentors and speakers. The hand-picked MESA students – all science, engineering, or math majors – represented more than 30 universities and community colleges from across the state.

“The conference was a first for me and I learned so much,” Khris said. “I attended a couple of workshops that really helped give insights into what it takes to be a leader, to find out what kind of workers employers are looking for, and how to present a good interview. The MESA program at El Camino College helped me with everything along the way.”

As El Camino College continues to support MESA and STEM students, the community is invited to attend the grand opening of the new ECC STEM Center at 5:00 p.m. Thursday, May 8.

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