



NEWS

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El Camino College Honors Transfer Program Ranked No. 1 in State

One week at a summer transfer conference at UCLA, and El Camino College student John Bacolores was hooked. He met new friends, found out about UCLA academic offerings, and even loved the dorm food at the Westwood campus.

Bacolores is in the El Camino College Honors Transfer Program (HTP), which just announced its ranking as No. 1 in the state for admission rate increases to UCLA. Among large regional community colleges, only El Camino College increased its honors transfer admission rate to UCLA, while other area colleges saw their rates drop.

This is particularly impressive because the number of Transfer Alliance Program (TAP) applications to UCLA has soared 20 percent during the past year. TAP stats are often considered the most important numbers for an honors program in California, because they demonstrate the quality of the program.

Bacolores is one of 84 outstanding El Camino College students to be admitted to UCLA, a record number. But, he has his sights set on the University of California at Berkeley and will transfer to Cal next spring to study psychology.

The road to Berkeley had a few twists, but Bacolores is certain the Bay Area university is the right choice. He was accepted to UC Berkeley when he applied as a senior at Carson High School, but decided he wasn't ready to move away and instead attended California State University, Dominguez Hills on a Presidential Scholarship, which covered all fees and expenses. After a year, he decided to look at other options and found his way to the El Camino College HTP Office.

"I realize now that coming to El Camino College was the greatest decision I have made in my entire life," said Bacalores. "Fall semester was a great transition. I took challenging classes in my major, I got involved in different activities and made new friends."

Since then, Bacolores has been involved in the Alpha Gamma Sigma honors society, the HTP Club, volunteer work at Cedars Sinai, and is the president of the ECC Psychology Club.

This spring, Bacalores was one of 14 students to participate in the statewide Honors Transfer Council of California (HTCC) Student Research Conference at UC Irvine. He presented his paper about bilingual education, “two-way immersion curriculum,” which teaches students English and Spanish concurrently.

“That experience was absolutely incredible. It was everything I envisioned my professional life to be... it was so great to have this opportunity,” said Bacalores, who was given the Outstanding Abstract Award, and won a scholarship for an essay about his HTP experience – grants totaling \$700 for the day.

The success of the El Camino College HTP is credited to great teamwork, from faculty and staff to students. E-mails regularly go out to students, sharing news about academic seminars and symposiums, reminding students of deadlines, and sharing information about upcoming classes. Counselors are on hand during the application process, and are ready to follow up on questions and other needs.

“I think the best part about the HTP is that the professors and staff are so good, and then of course, the students,” said Bacalores. “We are all working together and making it happen. It is great to be around so many students who have so much passion and work hard at school, like me.”

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