

MAKING THE MOST

of Your College Resources

by Hugo Mendoza, *Transfer Student, UC Irvine*

My name is Hugo Mendoza and I am double majoring in mechanical engineering and aerospace engineering at the University of California, Irvine.

I was born in Lima, Peru and came to the US at the age of 10. Being an undocumented student, I faced countless obstacles while pursuing my goal of becoming an engineer. Although I was accepted to several universities out of high school, I decided to go to community college for financial reasons. After 3 years I was able to transfer to UC Irvine, and with the help of the Dream Act I had my tuition and housing covered.

During my time at UCI, I've joined several programs to learn more about engineering. And, they've helped me make connections for internships and possibly future jobs in my field!

Through SAGE (Student Achievement Guided by Experience), I got an offer to intern for NASA at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory to work on the Mars Mission Modeling Project. Unfortunately, because of my legal status I was not able to accept the opportunity. Needless to say, I was crushed. This has greatly impacted my motivation for aerospace engineering and made me feel like I have no chance in this field.

But time stops for no one, I quickly got myself together and began looking for other opportunities in the field of mechanical engineering. Fortunately, I had also been involved with the Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers (SHPE), serving as its vice president last year and, I'm proud to say, as its president this school year.

With the connection that I made from SHPE, I was able to land an internship position at Baxter Healthcare as a manufacturing engineer. This was an opportunity of a lifetime; I never imagined that I would be working at a company that focuses on biotechnology helping patients around the world.

Going through these obstacles has taught me the value of dedication and perseverance. If it wasn't for my friends and family pushing me to move forwards, I would not be where I am at today. I am thankful for what I have, and excited to be graduating from UC Irvine as an engineer. ▣

STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

Services that support students academically and professionally at their campus such as Dreamers, Ombudsman, Food Pantry, EOP etc.

WORK-STUDY

In this federally funded program, students take campus jobs as part of their financial aid package.

