

# THE COUNSELING CONNECTION



Official Newsletter of General Counseling and the Counseling Equity Committee (CEC)



## The Student Spotlight

BY ROBERT RODRIGUEZ

"My name is Robert Rodriguez and I am majoring in Computer Science as well as Mathematics here at San Diego Mesa College. I'm currently at a 3.75 GPA so far in my Mesa career. I plan on transferring to UC San Diego or UC Berkeley this Fall to major in Computer Science with 2 AST's from Mesa as well as the IGETC certification. I'm currently a full time cybersecurity engineer at General Atomics. My ultimate career goal is to become a Chief Information Officer for a tech or defense company one day and earning an education is a vital step in achieving that goal. I started out enlisted in the Navy right out of high school, and served active duty as an IT for 6 years experiencing deployments and had the opportunity to visit many countries around the world! It was a great experience that I appreciate very much. In 2018, about 4 years into the Navy, I enrolled in Mesa College to begin my path of earning an undergraduate degree. After speaking to my counselor, I had received an education plan which laid the track to my success here at Mesa. Now that I'm transferring, I can reflect on what I have done to make it to this point. Many people often ask how I maintain a full time student status and work full time. I reply with ensuring I always have an equal balance of work/school/personal life by writing out my responsibilities and tasks in notebooks, and by managing my time effectively to allow ample time for studying after work, on weekends, and whenever else I can. School and work can become overwhelming very quickly, especially after 12+ hour days of work and class/studying, so don't forget to always make time for yourself, even if it is just a couple hours during the weekends. These times allow me to reflect and decompress, which gives me the motivation and energy to return to work and school.

## This issue:

Student Spotlight  
PAGE 01-02

Faculty Spotlight: Leroy Johnson  
PAGE 03

"The Equity Gap"-Christian Chavez  
PAGE 04-05

Counseling Hack: The Deans list and Honors  
PAGE 06

Counseling Information and the Counseling Equity Committee (CEC) FAQ's  
PAGE 07-08



"So don't forget to always  
make time for yourself."

-ROBERT RODRIGUEZ

## The Student Spotlight Continued

BY ROBERT RODRIGUEZ

If I can give advice to anybody who wants to enroll at SDCCD or Mesa College, it would be to maintain a strong and communicative relationship with your counselor (BIG shout out to Adam!). This helps make this stressful process of choosing classes, fulfilling any requirements, and transferring to a university a lot easier. Another tip I would give would be to take initiative as a student. If you aren't sure about something, don't be afraid to email or call multiple points of contact at Mesa's different offices until you get the help you need. Remember, they are there to help YOU. All of the faculty are extremely helpful and knowledgeable, so utilize them towards your succession in transferring, graduating, financial assistance, counseling, and anything else they offer to us as students. I can honestly say that I attribute most of my success here at Mesa to those points. Work diligently and it will reflect in your GPA, work, and achieving your goals!"

"Take  
initiative  
as a  
student"

-ROBERT RODRIGUEZ



Pictured here, Robert Rodriguez,  
Mesa College Student Spotlight

# COUNSELING

## The Faculty Spotlight: General Counselor Leroy Johnson

BY LEROY JOHNSON

Hello, my name is Leroy Johnson and I'm privileged to be the current Counseling Department Chair at Mesa. I began at Mesa in 1994 as an adjunct counselor and I must say, I've enjoyed every minute of being here. I have been privileged to work at Mesa teaching Personal Growth classes, as the Mesa Academy Coordinator, the Learning Communities Coordinator, Transfer Center Coordinator, and now Counseling Department Chair. Through all of these experiences, what stands out for me is the dedication of the people that I've worked with. Most importantly though, are the students who have enriched my time at Mesa. Over this time I have seen amazing improvements in our focus on student equity. We are now focusing on the often repeated phrase, 'Structural Racism' and addressing it through every means possible. Our counseling department is focused on creating the most equitable experience possible for our students. To do this, we feel we need to address the inequities that exist in the treatment of our Black students. These range from not feeling welcome in General Counseling, to receiving different treatment because of deeply held beliefs that Black students are just not as capable as other students. These beliefs hold a measure of truth, since we know that the treatment of Black students throughout their time in school has been unfair. Our department has made this a priority. We've formed a Counseling Equity Committee that meets weekly to help us plan and focus on this compelling department goal. This is the first edition of our counseling department equity newsletter. Please read it, and if you have any questions, please let us know. We can be reached at the counseling department by phone at 619-388-2672 or email: [sdmesafollowup@gmail.com](mailto:sdmesafollowup@gmail.com) We hope to connect with as many students as possible. Thank you for reading!

"Most importantly though, are the students who have enriched my time at Mesa"

-LEROY JOHNSON



Pictured here Leroy Johnson,  
Department Chair General  
Counseling



# "The Equity Gap"

BY CHRISTIAN CHAVEZ

## The Equity Gap

Why is there a gap in transfer for Black students? In order to begin understanding the gap, we must understand what led to the gaps, what happens before college matters. The California State University and the University of California systems are two sought out 4-year institutions California Community Colleges students transfer to. During the Fall 2020 application cycle, 4.79% of Black students transferred and enrolled to the University of California system (Undergraduate Admissions Summary, n.d.). And only 9% of all Black undergraduates in California are enrolled at one of the California State University campuses (State of Higher Education for Black Californians, 2019). Equity gaps between students based on their race, ethnicity and income persist and thrive at most institutions. Gaps are driven by poverty, and before a child is born, the odds are stacked against them (Amour, 2020). Beyond the current structural inequities in society are the historical inequalities that created a ripple effect, more blatantly it dates to slavery and a 400-year head start. Understanding and acknowledging the education around historical inequalities, does not only belong to Black students, but rather all Americans for a systematic change to occur.

We have a racial caste system in the United States, intersecting with Higher Education, its mission, promise and practice (Higher & Postsecondary Education, n.d.). As stated by the Teachers College of Columbia University – A Graduate School of Education, Health & Psychology (n.d.), "We witness the effects of systematic social forces on members of our Higher & Postsecondary Education community and the broader effects on higher education." Many Black students experience inadequate high school preparation, in turn the need for remedial education. Several students come from families that have no tradition of higher education, creating a lack of necessary support and understanding for nurturing the black student's effort to succeed in higher education (King, Jr., et al., 2006). The racial climate at some colleges and universities can affect black persistence and graduation rates. The Journal of Blacks in Higher Education (2021) further explains how financial difficulties hinder and boost black students from dropping out or not transferring: Two thirds of all black students who drop out or do not transfer do so for financial reasons. Others who have tried to work while going to college find that undertaking both tasks simultaneously is too difficult and, so, many of these students will drop out or not transfer to a four-year college/university. To provide equitable, valuable experience to Black students – colleges and universities have implemented practices designated to meet the needs of their campus. Such practices include institutional commitments to promoting student body diversity and inclusion on campus, diversity across all levels of an institution, outreach and recruitment of prospective students, support services for students, and an inclusive campus climate (King, Jr., et al., 2006). To address higher education inequalities San Diego Mesa College has developed a committee for Diversity Action, Inclusion & Equity. The purpose of the Committee for Diversity Action, Inclusion and Equity (CDAIE) is to develop and implement a strategy for diversity, inclusion and equity which is active and aligned with Mesa's mission, vision and values. The Committee's overarching goal is to engage and support students, faculty and staff in the ongoing process of transforming our campus environment into one which we envision as safe, supportive, culturally proficient, globally inclusive and reflective of the larger San Diego community (San Diego Mesa College., n.d). While community colleges, such as San Diego Mesa College are addressing equity, the gaps in transfer for Black students are more complex.

**"Understanding and acknowledging the education around historical inequalities, does not only belong to the black students, but rather all Americans for a systematic change to occur."-Chavez**



Pictured here Christian Chavez,  
General Counseling Adjunct Counselor

In summary, statewide community colleges transfer only 3% black students within two years, and 63% of black community college students do not earn a degree, certificate, or transfer within six years (State of Higher Education for Black Californians, 2019). Gaps in college access and opportunity to complete a degree have contributed to diminished social mobility across generations within the United States, particularly for Black students. These gaps in college opportunity are influenced by disparities in students' experiences before graduating from high school. In turn, intersect with the experiences of low-income and first-generation college students. There is still much work to be done. "Without education, there is not hope for our people and without hope, our future is lost."

-Charles Hamilton Houston

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**"Statewide community colleges transfer only 3% black students within two years, and 63% of black community college students do not earn a degree."-Chavez**



# Counseling Hacks: The Dean's List and Honors

BY ADAM ERLBUSCH

## Dean's List

A Dean's Honor List is compiled after each spring term for the academic year (fall to spring). To be eligible for the Dean's Honor List, a student must complete 12 units or more during the academic year and have earned a grade point average of 3.5 or better. A Dean's Honor List is compiled at the close of each academic year (Fall and Spring). Students will be notified by email of their academic standing.



The Honors Program serves self-motivated and qualified students by providing exceptional and intense learning experiences in classes that are usually highly interactive. Topics are explored in depth; typical assignments emphasize critical thinking, extensive reading and writing, and student presentations and critiques. Activities may also include opportunities for individual research projects, close interaction with faculty and participation in community and cultural events. In addition to honors class sections, the program also offers honors contracts through which individuals can pursue honors-level course work in a non-honors section. The Honors Program offers enhanced transferability to our partner institutions which include University of California campuses: Los Angeles and Irvine; Chapman University; Pitzer and Pomona Colleges; Loyola Marymount University, Occidental College, San Diego State University, and more. The Honors Program is open to all students (part-time or full-time, day or evening) and can be found in all disciplines (vocational, liberal arts, fine arts, sciences, business, etc.). For specific criteria and

other information, please consult the schedule of classes or contact the campus Honors Coordinator. Students enrolled in an honors section (including an honors contract), may not transfer to a regular section after the deadline to make a schedule adjustment for the class. Petition for honors credit after the course has been completed will not be permitted. For more information about the Honors Program, visit the website: [www.sdmesa.edu/honors/](http://www.sdmesa.edu/honors/).

Did you know  
that if you  
complete 12  
units at a 3.5  
or better, you  
will make the  
Dean's Honor  
List?

## FAQ For General Counseling

BY THE COUNSELING EQUITY COMMITTEE

### Frequently Asked Questions

#### While the college is closed, how are counselors meeting with students?

While we are operating remotely, counselors are available by telephone for drop-in counseling sessions and via zoom by appointment.

#### What is drop-in counseling?

Drop-in counseling is same-day counseling sessions (10-15 mins) that are delivered by telephone. Drop-in counseling sessions are ideal for quick questions. The following topics can be addressed during a drop-in session:

- Abbreviated Ed Plan (1 semester)
- Financial Aid Referrals
- Academic Renewal Petitions
- Probation & Disqualification
- Career/Transfer/Course Questions
- Petition Inquiries
- Info for prospective students
- Prerequisite Clearance

#### How do I meet with a drop-in counselor?

Students can call or email the Counseling Office at 619-388-2672 or [sdmesafollowup@gmail.com](mailto:sdmesafollowup@gmail.com) as early as 8am Monday through Friday to be added to the drop-in list for same day counseling sessions. Once you are added to the list, we will give you a callback timeframe. Students are added to the drop-in list throughout the day until capacity is reached.

#### When can I make a counseling appointment?

Counseling Appointments are scheduled one week in advance, one day at a time, by calling the Counseling Office at 619-388-2672 or by using our online appointment system, eSARS, located on the Counseling webpage. For example, if you call on a Monday, your appointment will be scheduled for the following Monday. Once the appointment is scheduled, you will receive an email with your Zoom meeting details. Students must meet the following conditions to schedule and keep the appointment:

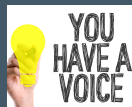
**Enrolled in at least one class at Mesa College,  
Transcripts from colleges outside of California must be received and evaluated and completed one semester of college coursework.**



Access the Counseling Equity Canvas Shell, request by emailing: [kcarson@sdccd.edu](mailto:kcarson@sdccd.edu)



Click the icon to see the upcoming Counseling workshops



Share your student experience in counseling! Click the icon to be directed to the "Voice" form





## FAQ For General Counseling Continued

### Frequently Asked Questions

**I have recently applied to the college and my next step is to attend a Pre-registration Workshop. Do I need to attend the workshop?**

Pre-registration Workshops are designed for first-time college students. If you are a returning student or have previously attended another college, the workshop is not required.

**How do I schedule a Pre-registration Workshop?**

To sign-up for a Pre-registration Workshop, you can either call the office at 619-388-2672 or visit the Workshop page on the Counseling website, or click the icon to the right.

**I need to clear a prerequisite, who do I contact?**

Prerequisites can be cleared via email. Please send an email to [sdmesaprereqs@gmail.com](mailto:sdmesaprereqs@gmail.com), be sure to include your name, student ID number, unofficial transcript(s) and the course(s) you wish to enroll in. You may also meet with a drop-in counselor to clear prerequisites.

**How do we contact the Counseling Office?**

Telephone: 619-388-2672

Email: [sdmesafollowup@gmail.com](mailto:sdmesafollowup@gmail.com)

**What are your hours of operation?**

Monday & Tuesday: 8-7pm

Wednesday & Thursday: 8-6pm

Friday: 8-3pm

## Tip Of The Month

**When are the best times to schedule an appointment or speak with a counselor?**

Non-registration periods are the easiest times to schedule appointments for future planning. Approximately September to late October and Mid February to beginning of April are slower periods in the counseling office. These times are after the add/drop deadline and before registrations dates are assigned to students.

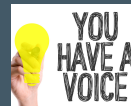
Newsletter Designed by:  
Adam Erlenbusch, Counselor



Access the Counseling Equity Canvas Shell, request by emailing: [kcarson@sdccd.edu](mailto:kcarson@sdccd.edu)



Click the icon to see the upcoming Counseling workshops



Share your student experience in counseling !Click the icon to be directed to the "Voice" form



To be featured as a "Student Spotlight" in a future newsletter please contact Kristy @ [kcarson@sdccd.edu](mailto:kcarson@sdccd.edu)