



I AM A STUDENT OF COLOR And I Earned My Seat At MIT



At FCE, Ricky found people who supported him along the way and knew how hard he worked to get into MIT.

Dumpster Diving. Most kids do it. After all, one man's trash is another man's treasure. But for Ricky, dumpster diving had a specific purpose. He was hunting particular treasure. Parts he could use to create his own robotics. Parts his family could not afford to buy.

Years earlier, Ricky's parents gave him his first video game, and they quickly learned a valuable lesson. That "M" on the box does not stand for "Mild." It stands for "Mature." Ricky's love of playing video games evolved into a fascination with how they work.

His computer science journey began with Scratch, a visual programming language he used to create games. He started building simple robots, often finding parts from items others had discarded. He joined the school robotics team. He participated in the Facebook Academy Externship, where his team designed an app allowing grocery shoppers to scan an item and instantly check out. Amazon would release Amazon GO just a short time later, dashing the team's hopes of becoming billionaires before high school graduation. While an intern at Nvidia, as part of a team creating a miniature self-driving vehicle to locate natural disaster survivors, a new fascination took root, artificial intelligence (A.I.).

Along his journey, Ricky encountered people who said he only secured his spot (on the robotics team, at Facebook Academy, at Nvidia) because he was a student of color. Ricky checked a box, filled a diversity requirement.

At FCE, Ricky found a cohort of students, volunteers, and staff who support his goals, believe in his aptitude, and know how hard he has worked to earn all his achievements thus far. He found donors who understand the unique challenges he faces as a student of color and who support FCE to ensure he has a chance to realize his dream of creating apps that will positively impact communities of color.

This fall, Ricky will enroll in Massachusetts Institute of Technology, where he plans to study A.I. He will be supported, in part, by an FCE donor-provided scholarship.



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FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Jocelyn Lee, MEd

My name is Jocelyn Lee, and I am honored to assume the mantle of executive director of Foundation for a College Education.

I come to FCE with more than 20 years of experience in education, working with students of color, and a deep personal commitment to education equality.

You might find yourself asking, "What will change at FCE?"

For FCE students and parents, day-to-day interactions should be the same. FCE staff are extremely talented and deeply committed to the work they do. I am confident that they will continue to deliver programs and services with the high quality that they have always shown.

As I begin my tenure, let me say a collective 'Thank You' for your ongoing support and commitment to FCE's mission. Because of your tremendous support, doors to higher education are opening for FCE students, and they are walking through, attending college, and graduating.

FCE students and families will need your ongoing support. I remain hopeful that you will continue to support their dreams and goals.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jocelyn Lee".



FOR MY SPRING BREAK

You Sent Me To 10 SoCal Colleges

One year ago, during second semester of high school freshman year, Rodrigo's family moved across the Bay to Hayward. Leaving his childhood home in East Palo Alto was tough. Rodrigo understood why they were forced to move – rising East Palo Alto housing prices, proximity to relatives, and a better life for their growing family – even though he would now have to wake at the crack of dawn to make the long commute to St. Francis High School.

Juggling the commute, schoolwork, extracurriculars, and Foundation for a College Education, Rodrigo is honing his time management and prioritization skills. Making the daily journey back-and-forth encouraged him to explore colleges outside the immediate vicinity.

Rodrigo's FCE Southern California College Tour

This past spring, FCE donors sent Rodrigo and twelve other high school sophomores on FCE's Southern California College Tour. From April 4th – April 10th, members of the Class of 2020 toured ten campuses, including CSU Long Beach, Claremont McKenna, La Verne, Loyola Marymount, Occidental, UC Irvine, UCLA, UC Riverside, USC, and Whittier.

During each visit, Rodrigo asked questions, engaged in informative conversations, and diligently took notes about engineering programs and resources for First-Generation College Students of Color.

Excited about the prospect of attending one of these universities, Rodrigo gained key insights about admission processes, academic support services, student organizations, and experiences of other students of color. He heard first-hand experiences about Whittier College from FCE College Success students Nestor Hernandez-Rico and Peter Valbuena, both of whom receive FCE donor-supported scholarships.

Rodrigo shared, "I enjoyed making a deeper connection with FCE friends and getting to see many colleges I might apply to. Because of the SoCal Tour, I have better knowledge of those colleges and how colleges are organized in general. All this will help me on my path to higher education."

FCE donors provide tours of both Southern California and East Coast institutions. These tours provide an invaluable experience for students whose families cannot afford such visits, and they increase critical visibility of FCE with the institutions that value the diversity and college readiness that FCE students bring to their campuses.



From top to bottom:
Loyola Marymount University,
UC Riverside and Whittier College

CLASS OF 2018 COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY COMMITMENTS



Luz Abarca
Woodside High School
Mills College



Ezequiel Armenta
Palo Alto High School
University of LaVerne



Daniel Avina
Woodside High School
Cañada College



Enrique Avina
Woodside High School
MIT



Angela Higuera
Castilleja School
Yale University



Jose Frausto-Sanchez
Everest Public High School
University of California, Merced



Alan Molina
Los Altos High School
Foothill College



Fernanda Moreno-Rubio
Menlo-Atherton High School
University of California, Riverside



Jose Rodriguez
Palo Alto High School
Sonoma State University



Liz Tapia
Palo Alto High School
Loyola University Chicago



Angel Tun-Perez
Summit Preparatory High School
California State University, Chico



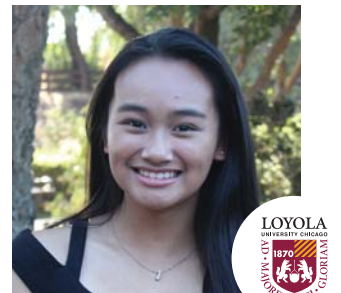
Alberto Salgado-Nava
Palo Alto High School
Allegheny College



Blanca Valencia
East Palo Alto Phoenix Academy
University of California, Riverside



Evelyn Velasquez-Moreno
Woodside High School
Lehigh University



Patricia Valbuena
Palo Alto High School
Loyola University Chicago

FOUR AND DONE

64% Of FCE Students Graduate College in 4 years; 85% in 5

In high school, Alondra felt like she was going to another world when she crossed San Francisquito Creek each morning to attend Palo Alto High School. But, that daily transition could not prepare her for the transition to Cornell College in Iowa.

The summer before college, FCE students participate in Senior Retreat and College Transition Week. "We set goals for what we want our first year of college to look like, write ourselves a letter to remind us why we are there, meet our College Coach, and explore campus resources for first generation students. That helped me feel prepared when I got to campus," said Alondra.

During first semester freshman year, homesickness set in. "I had been away from home for about 4 months, without visiting, and I got homesick. One day I received an unexpected box from FCE. A Care Package with snacks, a note from my dad, and my baby sister's favorite stuffed cat. I can never thank enough the donors and volunteers who sent that package. It gave me what I needed to push through and stay on course." The cat stayed with Alondra all 4 years.

The value of getting involved

From her experience at FCE, Alondra knew the value of getting involved. She joined the Cornell College Mock Trial Team and Lunch Buddies, mentoring 3rd graders. She was Vice President of Get Out of Town Club, taking students of color exploring off campus. She worked closely with the Intercultural Life Office, mentored freshman students of color, spent a semester in Spain, and focused her Senior Art Project on Walls & Immigration.

Donors to FCE provide support from Staff and College Coaches who ensured she met with her college advisors, stayed connected to friends, and helped with internships. One of Alondra's biggest support systems was the community she established at FCE.

"The Class of 2014 continues to stay updated on each other's lives. I don't know how many of us would have persisted without the support system we formed at FCE. Even though they were 2,000 miles away, my FCE friends all reached out during graduation. I felt like they were there."



Graduation Day, Cornell College, May 13, 2018

On Sunday, May 13, Alondra became FCE's 110th student to earn a Bachelor's Degree. This fall, she began the Master's Program at University of Denver.

A DIFFERENT LAUNCH

But The Same Graduation Goal

Though every member of the Class of 2018 was accepted into a four-year college or university, not every member will start the fall enrolled in one.

As part of FCE Parent Engagement & Leadership curriculum, each senior family fills out the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) or the California DREAM Act Application, and almost all fill out the College Scholarship Service (CSS) profile for private universities. From these forms, each family receives an EFC (Expected Family Contribution) amount. Furthermore, FCE requires each high school senior to apply for at least ten private scholarships.



Schools use the FAFSA-generated EFC differently to estimate a family's demonstrated need. Colleges meet that need at different levels by offering a combination of grants, loans, and work-study opportunities. The differences in financial aid packages become even greater when a family has more than one student in college.

Daniel— who happens to have a twin also enrolled in FCE — was accepted to ten different colleges. The financial aid packages from the boys' various college acceptances were dramatically different, with Daniel's colleges expecting the family to pay significantly more than his brother's. As a result, even with private scholarships, Daniel's family could not afford to make up the difference. Daniel will enroll in Canada College.

Daniel said, "I realized that the path I am choosing to take isn't in the opposite direction of my future goals, but just another way to get there! I am a living example that life isn't a straight road...it has curves, dips, and mountains to pass over." He added, "Straight roads do not make skillful drivers. It's the rougher ones, the nastier roads, that lead to the height of greatness."

Alan was accepted to four different colleges, but when Alan and his family met with FCE staff to evaluate different institutions' financial aid packages and to create a realistic four-year budget for the true cost of attending, Alan expressed a deep-rooted realization. He did not believe he was prepared for the rigors of a four-year institution. "I don't want my family to spend that much money for me to 'figure things out' and mature to the point I can succeed there."

After much consultation, Alan and his family made the decision he would enroll in Foothill College.

College admission is not the goal of FCE programs. FCE is committed to working with students until they graduate. Since 1995, donors who share the goal of closing the College Graduation Gap have helped support FCE students whether their journey to Bachelor's Degree takes four years, six years, or ten years.

Daniel and Alan will start their journey on a different path than other members of their class, but with the support of FCE donors, Daniel and Alan will achieve the same goal as 110 FCE alumni have, a Bachelor's Degree.



Top: Daniel
Bottom: Alan

EVICTED & HOMELESS

But I Won't Be Stopped

East Palo Alto is a community in transition. Some call it gentrification. Some call it displacement. But the fact is housing is limited. Rents are rising. Home prices are soaring. And FCE families are suffering.

Blanca grew up in East Palo Alto. For the decade between six and sixteen, EPA was her home, the place where she created fundamental memories and made deep-seated friendships. She enrolled in East Palo Alto Phoenix Academy (EPAPA) and Foundation for a College Education, determined to graduate high school, get a college degree, earn a JD, and practice law.

No where to move to

One day at the beginning of Junior year, Blanca and her family came home to discover an eviction notice on their front door. Within a few weeks, Blanca's stability crumbled. Her family packed their life into boxes. Her parents desperately searched for a new place to live, but escalating rents proved prohibitive. As their last day in their home approached, Blanca's family had no where to move to.

For more than a month, Blanca's family shuffled among friends' houses while looking for a place in East Palo Alto they could afford, but their searches were fruitless. Finally, the family was resigned to move into a one-bedroom apartment in San Jose with a family member, which meant Blanca would need to leave at 5:30 am to be at school on time.

She steeled her resolve, more determined than ever to achieve her dreams so that her family would never know such crisis again.

Through this difficult transition and a strenuous period during which EPAPA had lost several teachers, Blanca took advantage of all the programs FCE donors provide. She worked with FCE tutors to maintain a high GPA, especially in Advanced Placement courses. She participated in the FCE Southern California College Tour, Facebook Academy Externship, and the East Coast College Tour. She worked with her Senior Advisor on numerous college and scholarship applications and with FCE Staff to complete her California DREAM ACT application, and CSS Profile.

While Blanca was accepted to 13 colleges, her status as a DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals) student limited her financial aid packages and the states where she could consider living.

After consultation with FCE staff, during which her family developed a 'true cost' budget for her top three colleges, Blanca committed to University of California, Riverside, which she will attend, in part, thanks to FCE donor-provided scholarships.



Blanca college bound for UC Riverside

YOU GIVE STEAMERS CPR

Curiosity, Persistence, Resilience

FCE STEAM — a middle school Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics program — instills the curiosity, persistence, and resilience that will make students successful adolescents and learners prepared to excel in a college preparatory curriculum.

Angelica joined STEAM as a rising Grade 6 student. Like most of her cohort, patience and resilience were two skills she needed to develop. When things did not go as planned, she could become demonstrably frustrated with a project or a teammate.

This past spring, STEAM students undertook a project to use Design Thinking (Empathize, Define, Ideate, Prototype, Test) and engineering tools to create 3-D puzzles.

From a visualized idea, students created rough sketches, then used wooden blocks to create and revise a prototype until it proved successful. Students then illustrated a final sketch of how the puzzle worked and artistically-styled their unique 3-D puzzle.

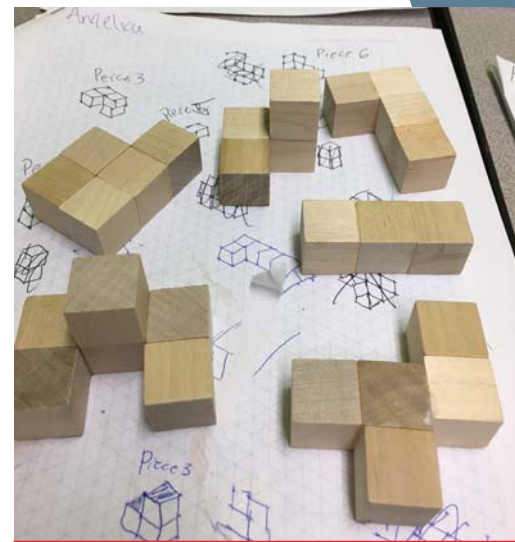
Angelica became frustrated during the Prototype phase, which she found difficult to complete, but STEAM Staff worked with her to persist through challenges until she had a successful model. But before Angelica could complete her sketches of how it fit together, her prototype was accidentally damaged. She had to start all over again and try to recreate her model from memory. Frustration and disappointment set in.

Mindfulness and breath-relaxation are two of the stress-reduction techniques STEAM students learn. Staff worked with her to use them to mitigate tension as she recreated each step of Design Thinking, eventually yielding a fully-realized 3-D puzzle.

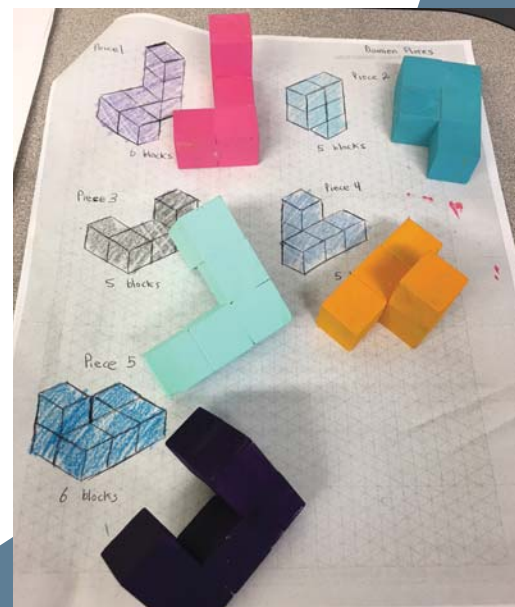
FCE helps Angelica and dozens of other middle school students hone Design Thinking, engineering, stress-reduction, persistence, and resilience skills that are integral parts of STEAM. This program is made possible by the continued support of SAP, the City of East Palo Alto, Sophie & Arthur Brody Foundation, Maskateer Charitable Corporation, and hundreds of individuals, family foundations, and donor advised funds.



Steam Puzzle Start



Steam Puzzle Raw



Steam Puzzle Finish