

Spring 2021



MSJC and Internship Lead Water Technology Major to Full-Time Job

It's not always clear where one's academic and career journey will lead, but MSJC Water Technology major and Menifee resident Francisco Aguirre knows he's on the right path now.

"I originally started at MSJC in about 2010 and ended in 2011. I was working about 60 hours a week making good money as a delivery driver," he explained.

In 2019, Aguirre decided to return to MSJC to pursue an associate degree in Water Technology. That decision has proven fruitful as Aguirre met with MSJC Career Education Counselor Matt Leyden, who helped him land an internship at Elsinore Valley Municipal Water District through the MSJC Cooperative Work Experience Education (CWEE) Program.

In March 2021, Aguirre's academic dedication at MSJC and successful internship helped him earn a full-time job as a Water Reclamations Operator in Training at Eastern Municipal Water District in Perris.

"MSJC was a big part all around in me being successful," Aguirre said. "I received a lot of support from the faculty like Instructor (Melita) Caldwell-Betties, Job Developer Carrie Tate-Meyer, and the tutors in the Menifee Valley Campus Library. I really appreciated all of that support."

After he earns his degree in August 2021, Aguirre plans to further pursue a higher education with a bachelor's degree in environmental science.

More than 11,000 water and wastewater plant operators are employed in California, and many of them are nearing retirement age. The average annual wage statewide is nearly \$70,000, according to the federal Bureau of Labor Statistics.

"You could earn a certificate in a little more than a year and go out and find a good-paying job with great benefits in a field that is always going to be in demand," MSJC Water Technology Instructor Melita Caldwell-Betties said.

Learn more about MSJC Career Education degree and certificate programs at www.msjc.edu/CareerEducation.

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MSJC Hosted Career Education Advisory Meeting

Leaders representing various industries throughout the Mt. San Jacinto Community College District region attended MSJC's virtual Career Education Advisory Meeting on February 26.

About 150 people attended the meeting in which MSJC Career Education deans and instructors explained the various disciplines the college offers and why it's important to receive feedback from local industries to shape them.

The meeting featured breakout rooms for deans, instructors and attendees to discuss programs such as:

- **Advanced Manufacturing & Engineering**
- **Advanced Transportation & Logistics**
- **Business & Entrepreneurship**
- **Culinary Arts, Hospitality and Viticulture**
- **Digital Media**
- **Early Education**
- **Energy & Construction**
- **Healthcare**
- **Information and Communications Technology**
- **Public Safety**

MSJC Career Education deans also discussed new and updated programs planned for the Fall 2021 semester at MSJC, including Aviation Science, Culinary Arts, Engineering, and Geographic Information Systems (GIS).

The meeting also highlighted the college's Eagle MakerSpace, which debuted in Fall 2018 at the Menifee Valley Campus, inspiring students of varying majors to invent unique creations using 3D printers. The facility also features a biotech component, making it stand out among other makerspaces in the state.

Anyone interested in joining MSJC's Career Education Advisory Groups for future meetings can email CareerEducation@msjc.edu. Expert voices from various industries in the region are always needed to provide insight to help shape MSJC's Career Education programs.



Education Center Delivers Distance Learning

The MSJC Child Development and Education Center has continued to serve and support children ages 2-5 and their families through the pandemic.

The center – based on the San Jacinto Campus – designed and launched a quality online distance learning program in which more than 60 children participate in weekly curriculum activities with their peers in a virtual classroom environment. It can be challenging to keep young children engaged through a computer screen, said Kimberly Day, director of the center.

“Our staff have done an outstanding job of developing Zoom curriculum,” she said. “They have become very skilled in their ability to keep the young ones – and the older ones for that matter – engaged in active learning, interactive activities that are developmentally appropriate.

“We will not allow a global pandemic to take this away from our Junior Eagles and their families,” she said. “We will stay true to our vision and our mission while remaining safe, staying healthy, and staying together.”

The center also has been able to supply students with backpacks from the Riverside County Office of Education-Resource & Referral and large bags of school supplies at a drive-through event.

Lead Students to Careers

Dr. Arnita Porter brings a wealth of experience and expertise to her position as MSJC’s Cooperative Work Experience Education (CWEE) Coordinator, helping students land jobs and internships.

Before moving to Southern California, Porter worked as a Capitol Hill lobbyist and In-house counsel for the Police Foundation, a law enforcement thinktank, where she lobbied Congress on the Brady Bill, the Assault Weapon Ban, the Hate Crimes Bill, and other public-safety related measures.

“I grew up a few miles from where the Greensboro Four (North Carolina A&T State University) students staged the civil rights sit-ins at the Woolworth counter in 1960,” she said. “So social justice is at the center of my practice as an artist/cultural worker, educator, consultant, and attorney with a background in public policy.”

Porter joined MSJC in 2020 as part-time faculty and Legal Studies Program Coordinator.

She earned her bachelor’s degree in communication studies from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro and a Juris Doctorate from North Carolina Central University School of Law.

Porter’s also very talented outside of MSJC.

“As a singer, I’ve recorded and/or toured internationally with artists from jazz to rock to hip hop, including Beek, Warren G, John Cale, Cree Summer and Cold War Kids,” she said. “I’m also part of the World Stage Anansi Writers Workshop, in Leimert Park, the cultural center of Black artists in Los Angeles.”

In addition to Porter, the CWEE team at MSJC includes Job Developer Carrie Tate-Meyer and Administrative Associate Karla Lazcano.

“We provide equity-based student-centered services that support and mentor students on their educational and career journey,” Porter explained. “In short, we want to prepare students for the job market. ... We’re working hard to identify paid and voluntary internships.

“Karla, Carrie, and I are committed to helping our students succeed,” she said.

Anyone looking for more information on the Cooperative Work Experience Education (CWEE) program can visit www.msjc.edu/careereducation/cwee or email aporter@msjc.edu or cwee@msjc.edu.



Nursing Students Celebrate Pinning Ceremony Virtually

The MSJC Nurse Pinning Ceremony for Fall 2020 was held virtually on Dec. 17, 2020, out of an abundance of caution during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

The virtual Nurse Pinning Ceremony was extra special for the 22 graduates as their loved ones were able to add the pins while celebrating among family and friends in the students' homes.

The Nursing Program was one of a few in the Career Education department that held some classes in person in the Fall 2020 semester.

Many nursing students volunteered to work at the COVID-19 testing sites hosted in Riverside County during the early days of the pandemic in spring 2020.

Following graduation at MSJC, the students take the National Council Licensure Examination (NCLEX). All of the students passed the nursing exam.



CalWORKs Helps Students Overcome Pandemic Challenges



Despite the ongoing pandemic, the MSJC CalWORKs team has continued helping their students with education, supplies, training and job skills while also providing them with laptops and hotspots to attend the college's online courses.

"The pandemic has proved particularly challenging for our CalWORKs students because they not only have to navigate their courses online, but also assist their own children in K-12 with online distance learning," said Lisa Campbell, who is the Director of CalWORKs at MSJC and also oversees the weekly Food 4 Thought food pantry.

In addition, students have been unable to earn extra money through work study opportunities since the college's campuses have remain closed since March 16, 2020, and have few positions to offer, she said. Staff and counselors are regularly available, and now also offer monthly motivational and informational workshops to help their students face possible anxiety, depression and stress.

"CalWORKs has been a program I could count on from the day I became a student -- from receiving gas cards, meal cards, and workshops to improving my academic experience," said student Marlisea Thomas, a Hemet resident majoring in Liberal Arts and Social Behavior. "I appreciate my village. Every student needs people in their lives to remind them they are important and can accomplish anything."

CalWORKs (California Work Opportunity and Responsibility for Kids) is a cash aid program administered through the Riverside County Department of Social Services. Students can learn more at msjc.edu/calworks or email calworks@msjc.edu.