



STEM Student Profile



Jair Lopez-Rodriguez

Global Disease Biology Major

Future Plans:

- Transfer to a 4-year university, then go to medical school

Advice for Students:

- Stay on-campus—come to the ISC/MESA Center where you can work on homework, meet with professors and ask questions. Join study groups and use the tutors.
- Just Apply! There are so many internships, scholarships and other opportunities.



Jair Lopez-Rodriguez is currently pursuing his associate's degree at the College of San Mateo with a transfer major of biochemistry. His CSM journey has been far from ordinary, with several prestigious medical internships already under his belt.

Over the summer, Jair participated in Prep Médico, a six-week program at the UC Davis School of Medicine where pre-med students shadow doctors, gaining hands-on clinical experience. The initiative seeks to diversify the medical field, encouraging those with Latino backgrounds to become physicians. Jair observed operating rooms, donned scrubs and attended talks led by healthcare professionals.

"Prep Medico was a one of a kind experience," Jair said. "I got to meet a lot of

doctors in different specialties. I did OB-GYN. I did nursing. I did hematology. And, I did some neuro."

It was MESA Project Director Olivia Viveros who first encouraged Jair to apply.

"When I applied to Prep Medico I had in mind 'I want to be a doctor.' But now I changed my mind to 'I'm going to be a doctor.'"

He had always been interested in science, but initially it seemed daunting to navigate such an expansive

field. The San Mateo County native is a first-generation college student and a child of Mexican immigrants. "I was kind of lost, transitioning from a small Christian private school to a public community college," Jair said. "And [MESA] actually helped me to study and set goals and plan."

Jair was struck by the Latino physicians he met through Prep Médico, many of whom broke the stereotypical profile of those in the field.

As part of the Prep Médico program he worked at Clinica Tepati, a UC Davis student-run health clinic, where he was inspired by the clinic's co-founder, Dr. Mark Diaz. Dr. Diaz introduced Jair to a doctor and researcher at Stanford School of Medicine.

That set another unique opportunity in motion: during his final year at CSM, Jair is doing research with Dr. Zoel A. Quiñónez at Stanford School of Medicine. Jair is a research assistant for a health disparities project studying heart disease in Latino children.

Dr. Quiñónez specializes in anesthesiology and now, Jair too is interested in becoming an anesthesiologist.

Reflecting on his experiences, Jair sees MESA as a stepping stone to the invaluable internships he has had in the medical field.

"The MESA program has been very helpful to me, and I'm very grateful for this," Lopez-Rodriguez said. "Having someone at your community college encourage you is something that you'll carry throughout your life."