



STEM Student Profile



Kassandra Carvalho

Electrical Engineering and Computer Science Major

Future Plans:

- Transfer to a 4-year university in fall 2024

Advice for Students:

- Don't be too hard on yourself. It is ok to struggle, that is part of the learning process.
- Get to know the professors, go to office hours. Ask questions. They want you to succeed.



Kassandra Carvalho's experience at the College of San Mateo has been defined by the MESA program — from internships, to conferences, to an unmatched support system. She's set to transfer this year with a major in electrical engineering and computer science.

The first-generation college student grew up in Bolivia and now lives with her grandmother. Kassandra has always seen medical technologies as her calling. "My grandma is almost 80 years old, and I go with her to her medical appointments," she said. "I take care of her. I know that there are devices that can help your loved ones to have a better life."

Soon after starting at CSM, Kassandra's calculus professor encouraged her to join MESA and explore its

unique opportunities. The first time she set foot in the program center, she instantly felt at home. Her calculus professor, Angel

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Pilar, and Professor Jose Gutierrez from engineering had a workshop to share their journeys from high school to community college, and transferring to a 4-year college. I under-

stood they did it, so I can do it, too.

"MESA is not only a program, it's a community where we always are able to build friendships and make connections," Kassandra said. "It's nice that you go inside and can talk to anyone."

For Kassandra, the most valuable part of MESA is its network of support. In Program Director Olivia Viveros, who she works under as a student assistant, she's found a lifelong mentor. "She's always telling us, 'Apply, apply, apply,'" Kassandra said. "And it's really fun, all these programs I get from MESA."

Among those programs was a summer robotics internship at San Francisco State University. Alongside a team of other students, she developed a prosthetic

arm. Before working at SFSU, she participated in Pathways in Health Technology, an eight-week mentoring opportunity featuring hands-on medtech activities.

Kassandra has also attended multiple conferences through MESA which focus on increasing diversity in engineering and supporting women in STEM. She's also the co-president of the STEM Club at CSM and a MESA peer mentor, guiding other students along their own journeys.

Looking ahead, Kassandra feels confident in her future career and her ability to navigate a four-year institution. "I remember I had this high school teacher who told me, 'Engineering is not for you,'" Kassandra said. "I decided to be the person that says, 'I'm gonna prove you wrong.'"