

Telling Our EOP Stories



EOP Alumni Spotlight: Q&A Session

By Linda Vang

Ignacio is the youngest of three children of immigrant parents who left Mexico in 1972. Despite minimal awareness of college and higher education, Ignacio began his pursuit of higher education at Mt. San Antonio College, where he met the staff of EOP&S, who assisted him in making progress towards his academic goals. Ignacio transferred to Cal State Long Beach where he completed his undergrad in mathematics and a master's program with an emphasis on student development in higher education; he then continued onto Iowa State University where he earned a Ph.D. in education with an emphasis in higher education administration.

Currently, Ignacio is an Assistant Professor in the department of Educational Research and Administration at Fresno State.

Q: Can you tell me about your experience as an EOP student?

A: As an EOP student at Mt. SAC and Cal State Long Beach I was privileged to meet many students who like me, had struggled to feel welcomed in higher education... Being an EOP student helped me gain valuable critical thinking skills to understand the bureaucracy of higher education, state financial aid systems, as well as how colleges and universities are governed.

Q: How do you think EOP plays a role in your undergraduate experience?

A: EOP helped me persist towards degree completion. Having a counselor who I could meet with regularly was a key factor in keeping me enrolled.

Q: What role do you think EOP plays in your success now?

A: I learned to develop my capacity to think about higher education systemically, rather than individually. EOP was always rumored to receive the largest budget reductions, which showed me that institutional priorities often do not take into account the needs of students who need programs and services the most. As an early-career professor, it is also important for me to remember how important those moments of inclusion were for me as I struggled along my own journey.

Q: If you can describe EOP in three words, what would they be?

A: Preparation, Opportunity, Energy

Q: What are some advices you would give to EOP students or students in general?

A: Know yourself. Understand your family and its histories since they can help you understand what is truly important. Make sense of your many identities: racial, sexual, gender, educational, family. Academics are certainly important, but realize it is information each of us can learn and gain mastery in. Take this time in college to learn about yourself and who you are as a person and who you are in relation to others. Find ways to be of service to others.

The EOP family would like to extend our appreciation to Ignacio Hernandez for sharing his story. Thank you Ignacio!



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