



March 2022 Newsletter

During Women's History Month, we want to shine a light on our talented and inspiring female Scholars and alumni and thank our female Board members and STEM professionals in our community for being outstanding role models and mentors.

Meet STEM Advantage Scholar Makayla



Makayla is earning a bachelor's degree in Computer Science at Cal State Dominguez Hills.

"I grew up with a fascination for technology in all its rapid development of the 21st century. My first exposure began with video games. As a kid, not only was it endless fun, but I was also amazed at the graphics and how I could control the movements of objects on the screen. Alongside this, I was also interested in art, music, and anything that involved creativity.

Despite my interests, it didn't occur to me that technology could be a career choice, and I didn't know what programming was. However, in my junior year of high school, I finally discovered the fascination and creativity behind computers in an introductory programming course. It wouldn't be until my freshman year of college and choosing computer science as a major that I would see its possibilities.

Still unsure of what career paths lie ahead of me in pursuing my degree, I joined STEM Advantage during the pandemic. From the support they have given me financially and academically, this program has done an extraordinary job in providing opportunities and assisting students to prepare for a career in the STEM industry. STEM Advantage has helped me acquire an internship during my sophomore year as a technical analyst with Accenture. During my time there, I gained valuable soft and technical skills, created meaningful connections, and overall learned what it was like to work in tech. I've had the benefit of speaking with amazing mentors who were supportive and provided advice throughout my career journey. I also really enjoy the workshops that are offered for students on professional development, resume and network building, and different career paths that help me develop the career I want to see.

All the hard work that goes into helping women and underserved communities excel in STEM is noteworthy and something that is essential in a system that has and still denies many people such opportunities. As a black woman, I stand on the shoulders of outstanding leaders who have made a difference and championed for change even when they weren't given the recognition they deserved. I believe it is my purpose to uplift the unheard voices and to give back to those without access to pursue such opportunities. Through representation and support, we can be one step closer to changing the way we want to see the world, for the better. I am grateful to have this platform as a STEM Advantage scholar and will continue to keep working hard towards my goals."

Meet STEM Advantage Scholar Evelyn



Evelyn is a third-year Biomedical Engineering major at Cal State Long Beach.

"This past summer I interned for Inari Medical, a medical device company dedicated to creating venous-specific devices to treat venous diseases. I was part of the research and development department where I executed more than fifteen blood tests to collect necessary data for Federal Drug Association approval on a blood returning system.

This was my first introduction to the process of how a device gets introduced to the market and it was very rewarding to see a product go through the final steps of the cycle. I helped to develop a nitinol braiding component for an early life-cycle product in preparation for launch. I was very fortunate to be called back for a winter internship with Inari where I could see my component in action.

The most important thing I learned through my internship was that people who look like me can be engineers. I am a first-generation Hispanic woman pursuing a career in STEM which is not the norm in my community. I did not meet a Hispanic engineer until joining Inari where I met my role models because seeing is believing and I can now picture myself as an engineer.

My internship experience would not have been possible without the guidance of my STEM Advantage mentor. My mentor took the time to prepare me for success by reviewing my resume and preparing me for interviews. She eased my transition into the workforce by being available to always contact and supporting me when I was overwhelmed. By having guidance, starting my first internship was easier than expected as I was more confident and relieved. I can share experiences with someone who has been in my shoes. The STEM Advantage scholarship has helped me afford the necessary technology and textbooks to thrive in my education. The workshops have aided me in preparing myself to be the best employee I can be. With multiple guest speakers, I can get an inside scoop to multiple careers which expands my knowledge of options for the future. STEM Advantage supports my education which is preparing me for my professional career."

Meet STEM Advantage Alumna Stephanie



Stephanie is a Business and Integration Architect Analyst at Accenture. She graduated with a Mechanical Engineering degree from Cal State Long Beach.

"During my educational journey I was part of multiple support programs including the STEM Advantage Program. STEM Advantage provided me unique support by pairing me with a mentor who guided me during my student to professional transition. I was awarded a scholarship that allowed me to focus on my schooling and assisted me on the journey to landing internships.

Through STEM Advantage I became more interested in Accenture and was provided a connection to employers that were part of the program. Now at Accenture I am part of the leadership team of the Southern California Analyst Team and the Accenture Developing Partnership Volunteering Community. I have been able to work with other STEM Advantage alumni on the Southern California Women Employee Resource Group on event planning. Now I am aligned to work in SAP implementations and have the goal to become an SAP Analytics Analyst. To complement my career journey, I will also be pursuing a master's in Data Science.

As a first-generation Latina in STEM the process has not been easy, but I have the support of programs such as STEM Advantage that will continue to help me reach my goals."

Hire Summer Interns & New Graduates

If your company can provide paid summer internships and/or hire new graduates, please reach out to Lee Ann at leeann@stemadvantage.org.

Women's History Month Panel

STEM ADVANTAGE
ADVANCING EQUITY THROUGH EDUCATION

From Striving to Thriving
Navigating Your Career as a Woman
in STEM
Friday, March 25, 2022 from 2:00 PM to 3:30 PM

MODERATED BY:

 Raquel Marquez Commercial IT Farmers Insurance	 Christina Shareef Head of Diversity, Inclusion & Belonging Reddit	 Melanie Hildebrandt VP, Enterprise Systems & Development WestRock	 Leala Shah Crawford Managing Director Deloitte
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"Excellent panel. Definitely my favorite thus far. It's great feeling I'm not as isolated and have some reflection. It's nice to have discussions about what we can do to advocate for ourselves and other underrepresented groups and find hope to persevere through all the challenges." - Madison, STEM Advantage scholar

To honor Women's History Month, we gathered a stellar panel to discuss how they navigated their careers to be recognized and honored as successful executives, and as women leaders in STEM. Our panelists shared their experiences and delivered candid advice on bias, imposter syndrome, the importance of mentors, sponsors, and allyship, having a brand, and "being the only" woman, Black woman, or Latina at the table. This interactive discussion and networking with our female Scholars and alumni, and allies was enlightening and empowering.

Thank you to our moderator Raquel Marquez (Farmers Insurance Group) and panelists Christina Shareef (Reddit), Melanie Hildebrandt (WestRock), and Leala Shah Crawford (Deloitte). We are honored to have Raquel, Christina and Melanie on our STEM Advantage Board of Directors and Deloitte as a Strategic Partner.

Invest in Diverse STEM Talent

Talent is equally distributed, but opportunity is not. STEM Advantage mentors, prepares, and inspires women and underserved communities to pursue STEM careers. We provide economic and social mobility to underserved groups, while providing a vetted pipeline of diverse talent to businesses to fill their workforce needs. In 2021, Los Angeles Business Journal honored STEM Advantage as Diversity, Inclusion + Equity Nonprofit of the Year.

100% of your tax-deductible gift supports STEM Advantage Scholars, who are mostly low-income, first-generation college students, attending California State University (CSU), the *largest and most ethnically diverse 4-year public university system in the nation*. Thank you for making an investment that is changing lives.

DONATE NOW

For more information, please contact Lee Ann at leeann@stemadvantage.org, visit our website <http://www.stemadvantage.org>, and follow us on social media.



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STEM Advantage
117 22nd Street
Huntington Beach, CA 92648 - USA