



# SRJC Alumni & Friends

As a first generation college student, Linda Dada felt lucky to have Santa Rosa Junior College in her community.

“I had no idea what I wanted to do. I knew I was going to attend SRJC after high school. I was always good at math and liked math, but I was still trying to figure out what I wanted to pursue.” Linda’s sister, also a student at SRJC, met Darci Rosales, Program Coordinator for MESA, at the college’s annual open house, Day Under the Oaks, and joined the program. With her sister’s support and encouragement, Linda also joined the MESA program.



MESA, which stands for Mathematics Engineering Science Achievement, serves educationally and economically disadvantaged students so they can excel in math and science and attain STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) degrees from four-year institutions. With tutoring, mentoring, study sessions, transfer counseling and study centers, MESA provides an environment that allows students to succeed and navigate the transfer system more easily. Established in 1970, the statewide California Community College MESA has programs in more than 30 community colleges.

“Going through MESA helped me nail down what I specifically wanted to study and what classes I needed to complete. MESA’s counseling helped keep me on track to transfer and I really valued the mentoring and job shadowing activities that were offered to us.”

The job shadowing opportunities MESA provided were influential on Linda’s career path. “I started in civil engineering and then conducted a job shadow through MESA. I learned from that experience that civil engineering is boring to me! It focused too much on things that stay static and still like roads and bridges. Mechanical engineering was more interesting to me because it focuses on movement.”

Keysight Technologies (formerly Agilent) has been a long-time supporter of SRJC’s MESA program. Although Linda was familiar with the company from living in Sonoma County, she did not know much about the variety of roles and opportunities available for engineers within the organization. Through MESA, Linda was able to secure a job shadow opportunity with Keysight and was impressed with their culture.

After completing her courses at SRJC, Linda transferred to UC Berkeley and double majored in mechanical engineering and material science engineering. Although pursuing two majors was stressful, Linda persevered with the help of a study group and support programs. A Sonoma County girl at heart, Linda knew she wanted to return to her roots to live and work. Today, as an

engineer for Keysight, Linda is thrilled to be working for a company she admires in her hometown.

“Keysight is an excellent fit for me. The company is very much in line with their values and I love working here. I wouldn’t have realized Keysight had different types of engineering roles if I hadn’t been exposed to the company through MESA.”

Linda pays forward the positive experiences she had in the MESA program to the next group of students. She sits on MESA industry panels as the expert and encourages students to pursue their STEM education.

“I benefited so much from MESA. I wouldn’t be an engineer, I would have even known what an engineer was or gotten through my classes without MESA. I owe so much to the program and I love to give back.”