

The Campaign for

College Opportunity

IN THEIR OWN WORDS: STUDENT STORIES

Summer Sandlin, 20, Los Positas College



Summer Sandlin wants to be a high school teacher. Summer expected to be able to transfer to UC Davis after two years at Los Positas College, but she was turned down by UC Davis despite having a 3.3 GPA. Along the way she had trouble getting the classes required to transfer. “You cross your fingers and hope to get into English 1A. Last year they had to cut tons of classes. It’s getting more and more packed here,” says Summer, who just completed her third year at the Livermore community college. “Class sizes are out of control. People are sitting on the counters and sitting on the floor.” The first in her family to go to college, Summer is convinced that a degree is a key to success. “My parents generation were the last generation

that could get anywhere in the world without a degree,” she says. “My generation is looking at getting master’s degrees just so we can get into the field we want to be in and get paid a decent amount of money.”

Jonathan McCracken, 35, Los Angeles Mission College



Jonathan McCracken is one of the many students who have suffered the consequences of class cancellations in community colleges following budget cuts. Jonathan was one class away from obtaining his paralegal certificate, when the class he needed was cancelled. “I felt deprived from getting my paralegal certificate because I could not take the last class I needed to complete my degree,” he says. Finally, a year later, the class was added to the class schedule. Jonathan enrolled in the course, and obtained his paralegal certificate this summer. In addition to the shortage of classes, Jonathan feels that many students are not

attending college because they are not aware of the financial aid that is available.

Elyde Arroyo, 19, Mesa City College, San Diego Community College and Miramar College



Unable to get all of the classes she needs on just one campus, Elyde Arroyo attended three San Diego community colleges in fall 2004 and attended two in spring 2005. Elyde hopes to major in Political Science and Women's Studies once she transfers to a four-year university, but the trouble is getting there. With two part-time jobs and a 19-unit course load, Elyde also has to travel all over town just to get the courses she needs.

"It would make it so much more convenient to attend one campus instead of racing all over town between three," she says. "But the hardest classes to get into are the ones I need to fulfill my general education requirements."

Amrah Salomon Johnson, 27, San Francisco State University



Amrah Salomon Johnson had trouble getting classes first at a community college and then when she transferred to San Francisco State University. Because she transferred to S.F. State as a Political Science and Creative Writing double major, Amrah thought that she would have a wider course selection. However, this did not turn out to be the case. Amrah was obligated to enroll in two classes that would not count toward her graduation to remain a full-time student in order to receive complete financial aid. She explains, "My classes are not only overcrowded, but physically uncomfortable. There are not enough seats, and many times I have no other option but to sit and take notes on the floor."

David Tate, 19, Fresno City College



David Tate graduated from Fresno High School in June 2004. As a high school student, he faced crowded conditions and a lack of books and other resources in his school. Immediately following graduation, David went to Fresno City College and took the placement tests and registered at the college. He was eager to sign up for classes and get started on his college education, working toward a 2-year or 4-year degree. When David went to sign up for his general education classes, however, a college staff member told him that the college was "basically full" and asked if he could come back next semester. He was surprised that he had to wait, and instead of starting his classes, David found a job instead. He went back at the beginning of winter semester and got his classes, but lost a semester before he could start.