

All About Student Success

Building Relationships on Campus for Student Success

Spring, 2018 issue

Letter from the Director, Lauren Smith

Welcome to Spring, MHCC Community.

As you read our newsletter, I want to direct you to some exciting new resources for our area. Through East County Pathways (ECP) grant funding, last year AVID|Learning Success Center was able to produce several videos showcasing who we are and the work that we do.

All of the videos were filmed, edited, and created by AVID Learning Specialist and Multimedia genius Grant Burgess, through ECP funds.

Footage for the videos was shot over last summer and during fall/winter terms and showcase two inspiring stories of current MHCC students, Nyasia Grant and Cristina Taribello, who use AVID|LSC Services, as well as short 1-minute and 3-minute overview videos of our department and the various service points within.

We plan to use these videos in social media posts and promotions, department marketing, and during our class visits to encourage students to come up to see us and to increase student referrals. For MHCC staff and faculty, these videos also offer a glimpse into “life” on the third floor, how students can use our support services, and how to learn more about us.

We work on a large campus that can sometimes feel a little siloed. Our hope is that these videos promote our services and areas and help to define what AVID|LSC is, but also that they highlight the thing all of the campus has in common: our students and their stories.

Many thanks to Grant Burgess for making the videos happen and to former ECP Coordinator (and current AVID Coordinator) Sarah Aimone, for her vision for these videos and for sponsoring the work. Enjoy and have a wonderful last term before summer!

Video links below (click on the link):

[The Bridge Program at MHCC](#)

[MHCC AVID and Learning Success Center Tour](#)

[AVID Profiles: Nyasia](#)

[AVID Profiles: Cristina](#)

Spring Bridge 2017: Preparing New Students for Success

by Sarah Aimone

Can you imagine beginning your college career during spring? Not much fanfare or campus activities. No “Ask Me” tables. Other students who began in fall or winter term have already settled into their groove and figured out how to navigate campus and student life. Most scholarship deadlines have already passed. You might feel a bit lost and out of the loop.

Four hundred and eighteen students started at MHCC for the first time this term and faced those potential challenges. But the **23** students who registered for **Spring Bridge** had it a little easier. Facilitated by AVID|Learning Success Center staff, Spring Bridge is a one-day orientation designed to introduce essential skills, tips, and tools to ensure students get off on the right foot.

What do students have to say about their experience?

“Overall great program, especially for newcomers to take.”

“What I liked about Spring Bridge was getting the most important information about my classes and what to do to get the most out of my college experience.”

“VERY friendly and helpful staff. They answered my questions before I even asked them!”



(Photo above of students at start of Spring Bridge.)

Spring Bridge is a part of the larger Bridge programming created by AVID|LSC with support from various departments across campus. Offered before fall, winter, and spring terms, Bridge has earned the reputation as a meaningful and supportive event for new students. We invite MHCC staff & faculty to get involved! Please contact Sarah Aimone for more information: sarah.aimone@mhcc.edu

Tenzin Sangpo Brings Skill and Gratitude to Tutoring

Tenzin Sangpo understands the AVID|LSC’s dedication to “Socratic tutoring.” In some ways, his whole life prepared him to be the kind of tutor who draws students out by questioning, someone who embodies the open-minded search. Circumstances shaped him that way.

It began with his grandparents’ flight from Tibet ahead of the invasion of Mao’s Red Army in 1959. They trekked the Himalayas, with little protection, to Nepal, where, thirty years later, Tenzin was born in Kathmandu.

He went on to receive a solid education in a private school there--at least until the day in June, 2001, when Nepal's crown prince allegedly assassinated Nepal's King Birendra.

The new government seemed less supportive of the Tibetan refugee population. Tenzin and his family fled to Dharamshala, northern India, to the community around the Dalai Lama.

"It was a difficult experience," says Tenzin, "to leave one of Nepal's finest schools to go to a refugee school. But I learned a lot of things."

Among those things were his Tibetan culture, and Buddhist teachings and philosophy, which emphasized learning and character. That Tenzin would excel at learning was presaged by the name that the Dalai Lama personally chose for him. "Ten" refers to the teachings of the Buddha, and "Zin" means one who has grasped it.

Tenzin delighted in the debate and lively contest of ideas he learned in the classrooms there. By the end of eighth grade, he received the highest scores among students in the refugee schools, and was elected "prefect" of his school, a job with a leadership role to keep students on track with their learning and class attendance, among other things.

In 11th and 12th grade, Tenzin attended a school for gifted Tibetan refugee students with rigorous courses in physics, chemistry, math, Tibetan, and English. "It was difficult, but I was productive there," said Tenzin, of this time in which he played sports, contributed to a variety of cultural activities at the school, and published a collection of his essays.



(Photo of Tenzin Sangpo above)

Not long after Tenzin graduated, his parents applied for asylum in the U.S. Tenzin came to the U.S. in October, 2013, as a sort of second-time refugee, in search once again, with his family, for a still better life, this one in the “vibrant Tibetan community of Portland.”

His first decision here was to enroll in MHCC. “We visited MHCC,” he remembers, “and I instantly fell in love with this place.” He quickly found people who reminded him of the excellent mentors he’d known in India: Bernadette Harnish, who led his Chemistry 221 and 222 classes, and Chris Jackson, who taught the questioning mind to his Dialectics class, and Nicci Harwood and Eric Juenemann, who watched over him on the Trio Program.

Tenzin got the student’s view on the AVID|Learning Success Center, seeking out tutoring help for math, chemistry, and writing. After two terms, Tenzin was ready to transfer, and he chose to enroll as a Physics Major at Reed College, attracted by its rigor and by its nuclear reactor, which fascinated him.

After three years at Reed and a prestigious summer “Research Aide” position at Argon National Lab in Chicago, after which he published a scientific paper on nanocrystals, Tenzin decided to take a break before

doing his final year at Reed. He thought once again of MHCC: “Home is where the heart is, and this school will always have a special place for me after so many wonderful experiences here.”

Tenzin is spending this year as both an MHCC student and as a tutor. He’s taking statistics, and using a creative writing course to advance his work on a novel, and a Spanish course, “to exercise another part of my brain.”

On the tutoring floor, he’s walking students through the thought processes for math, physics, chemistry, and statistics, emphasizing the questioning and critical thinking he’s been practicing his entire life. “I test my students’ patience sometimes by asking too many questions, but I really want them to find the joy of learning for themselves.”

He tells of a calculus student who wanted a quick fix on his problem. Tenzin saw that the student lacked a good understanding of derivatives, and he questioned him for some time, helping him move toward defining the basic ideas. The student was at first impatient and annoyed. When they finished, he was visibly relaxed and thanked Tenzin.

Tenzin questioned another student about the difference between simple and compound interest. “We went slowly,” he says. “Then it was worth it in the end when I could see the light in her eyes that told me she understood.”

“Teaching is the highest form of giving you can demonstrate,” he says, citing a truth he learned in India. And tutoring with especial skill is his gift, prepared from his childhood. “I try my best,” he says. “I’m also trying to give back to Mt. Hood from my experiences here. I try to reciprocate.”

Did You Know?

All students can find support in AVID|Learning Success Center. Unsure where to start? Have your students go to the AVID Center in Room AC 3315; we’ll direct them to the writing help, study skills help, “college knowledge,” computer skills, or content tutoring help they need.

Contact Us

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The AVID/LSC website is at: www.mhcc.edu/lsc

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