



San Joaquin Delta College
5151 Pacific Avenue
Stockton, CA 95207

Media Advisory

For More Information Contact:
Public Information Office
(209) 954-5131
www.deltacollege.edu

Delta College Engineering Students Excel! Berkeley, Here We Come!



(L-R) Instructor Danell Hepworth, Timothy Fuller, Gerardo Chavez, Ilyssa Evans, Ryan Row, Joseph Falcao, Instructor Ben Howser

Delta College engineering instructor **Ben Howser** cuts to the chase. “I’m always happy when one of our students is accepted to UC Berkeley, but when FIVE make it in one year, the entire school is proud!” Howser doesn’t waver. “We want to shout out loud to the community!”

The 2014-15 school year promises to be an exciting one in the lives Delta engineering students **Gerardo Chaves, Ilyssa Evans, Joseph Falcao, Timothy Fuller** and **Ryan Row**. All those labs and hard work paid off. Berkeley awaits!

“This is my sixth year teaching at Delta College,” says Howser. “We’ve always had great students in the program. This year’s crop is especially outstanding.” Howser emphasizes that these students have been in classes together for 2-3 years and provided each other with lots of support, “Including competition.”

Engineering faculty member **Danell Hepworth** agrees. “They are hardworking, diligent and enthusiastic young men and women. All have completed a rigorous course schedule of physics, chemistry and math, in addition to required engineering courses.”

Each of the Berkeley students agrees that Delta’s supportive instructors and challenging coursework helped pave the way for their engineering ambitions. Howser and Hepworth note that Delta’s engineering students also have excellent math, chemistry, physics and biology instructors who share in developing their talents. Howser adds, “Since they all had to write essays to be admitted to Berkeley, their English instructors must be doing an awesome job as well!”

However, a full load of classes doesn’t always bring the day to a well-deserved close. Danell Hepworth points out that Delta’s engineering students often volunteer their time in the community tutoring young scientists at local elementary and high schools. “They encourage other students to follow in their footsteps. I look forward to seeing their wonderful future accomplishments.”

West High grad **Ilyssa Evans**, 20, plans to work toward a PhD in Chemical Engineering. “I have never seen professors that care as much about their students as Dr. Howser and Danell Hepworth. They never miss our Society for Hispanic Professional Engineers (SHPE) and Society of Women Engineers (SWE) meetings. They make the engineering experience at Delta a fantastic one by ensuring we have a solid understanding and foundation.”

Ilyssa had a penchant for Dr. Howser’s lab reports, which ultimately led to an engineering insight. “While Dr. Howser graded the reports hard, I enjoyed doing them. The work made it seem like we were already engineers compiling real reports for industry. These reports opened my eyes to what engineers really do - in addition to good math and science skills.”

Ilyssa will put her lab report skills to good use this summer. She was accepted for a nine week internship at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology on a chemical engineering project. That’s right - MIT! A great learning experience is at hand. Congratulations Ilyssa!

Tracy High grad **Joseph Falcao**, 20, said he “wasn’t sure” he wanted to pursue mechanical engineering as a career until he took AutoCAD and Drafting at Delta. “Delta’s Engineering Program is amazing. I never would have expected that Delta College would have so much to offer students interested in engineering careers.” Falcao emphasizes that Delta’s instructors have “real-world experiences as engineers.”

Falcao eventually wants to work in the automotive or aerospace industry and realizes he has just scratched the surface of his engineering knowledge. He advises that careers in engineering are bright. “There’s a huge, constant demand for engineers in California; lots of companies are looking to recruit. I look forward to seeing Delta expand its program.”

West High grad and aspiring entrepreneur **Gerardo Chavez**, 20, originally wanted to become an automotive mechanic, but decided engineering was the path to take. “I found that I could apply physics, math, and engineering courses to real life applications. This helped me change my career goal to Mechanical Engineering.”

Gerardo would eventually like his Mechanical Engineering degree to provide the knowledge to “innovate a new product” with philanthropic commercial prospects. “With this product, I will strive to create a successful company. I would like my product to have a positive impact in my community.”

Yes, Gerardo knows the academics at Berkeley will be challenging, but he credits Delta’s Engineering Program with preparing him for the competitive atmosphere at Berkeley. “The greatest challenges will be creating a new network of engineering peers. I won’t have a problem adjusting because of my flexible personality. Delta’s program prepared me for what’s to come - I’m more than ready.”

Timothy Fuller, 24, was homeschooled. He shares an outside engineering interest with Gerardo Chavez. Both work on restoring a 1947 Taylor Craft Aircraft at the Stockton Metropolitan Airport. As you might suspect, Tim would like to become an Aeronautical Engineer. In fact, Tim’s aunt was an Aeronautical Engineer who worked for Boeing and NASA’s Mars programs. *Impressive.*



Delta engineering students work on the Taylor Craft Airplane at the Stockton Airport.

“My aunt was an inspiration; she worked on the Mars Rover Curiosity mission. However, I didn’t know if I was cut out for technical work.” Tim’s doubts were soon put to rest. After excelling in mathematics at Delta, Tim was encouraged by math instructor Christopher Barker. “He said that I did indeed have the technical skill set.” With reservations in remission, Tim decided to give engineering “a shot.”

Tim adds that Delta’s professors are motivated to see their students succeed. “They make themselves extremely accessible. That combination makes the learning experience an exceptional one. The Engineering Program focuses on repetitive mastery of new material.” Tim finishes, “You learn from your mistakes.”

Numerous career choices are always attractive for new students. Such is the case with **Ryan Carlton Row**, 20, a Tracy High grad. Ryan was initially intrigued by the variety of science, math and engineering courses Delta offered. “In addition, the college was close to home,” offered Row. These choices motivated Ryan to make engineering his career path. “The physics and math programs were both good, but the engineering program was simply fantastic.”

Row says the Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers (SHPE) pointed the way to a number of interesting and fun projects, including Delta’s award winning solar boat “*SHPEs Ahoy!*” which won the speed contest at this spring’s Northern California Solar Regatta at the Rancho Seco Recreational Area. *SHPEs Ahoy!* also tied for second in the endurance race and finished third in the slalom. Well done team Delta!



Delta Engineering’s Solar Regatta team and SHPEs Ahoy! Team members are already planning for the 2015 event.

Ryan and other aspiring engineers also worked on the Taylor Series Airplane renovation at the Stockton Airport. “The Stockton Airport people were energetic, fun, and a number of students joined them for airplane rides.” Row credits Delta’s engineering professors for their extra efforts. “The staff provides new students opportunities they would see at no other community college.” As with the other future U.C. students, Row’s career aspirations are selfless. “My career goals are to attain a PhD, doing meaningful research that will better our community.”

No question, the search to find the right college after high school can be daunting, and at times intimidating. Not to fear, Ryan Row has some astute advice for potential Delta College engineering students. “I absolutely recommend and encourage students to consider Delta’s Engineering Program. You won’t need to look too far - **Great program and great staff! Go for it!**”



Engineering Student Jacob Heth captains SHPES Ahoy!

Article by James Vergara

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