

DUAL ENROLLMENT STUDENT PROFILE, MELISA

CLP

Melisa Osuna had her first experience with college classes in a Chicano Studies dual enrollment class offered at her high school. Now this first-generation college student is a new graduate with a bachelor's degree in social work. For Melisa, not only did dual enrollment open the door to college early on, but it also led to a deeper understanding of her own community's history, strength, and resilience as leaders of the Chicano Movement. This was empowering, shifting her mindset about college from one that felt intimidated by the prospect to one that felt excited about what was to come.



Melisa learned about the dual enrollment classes offered by East Los Angeles College at her high school through her counselor. In her junior year, she decided to give it a try. The class was scheduled during regular school hours, at her high school, and enrolled her peers who were also interested in trying something different. Upon enrolling, Melisa had no idea what to expect, but what she found was a welcoming college classroom experience with a professor who was supportive both in the pedagogy and policies of the class. This combination of factors—location, time, approach, and flexibility—helped her and the other Esteban E. Torres High School students feel excited about what they were learning in their first college class.

Melisa found that not only did dual enrollment get her comfortable and excited about college, it also gave her the confidence to pursue other opportunities like internships. In her senior year of high school, she completed an internship with the Los Angeles County Museum of Art. This internship experience sparked her interest in working with young people and led her to focus on a future career in social work. The internship had her working with local youth and local artists. She loved the work, and she built connections and a network that helped her to envision ways this experience linked to college and career.

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Having completed her bachelor's degree at Cal State University Los Angeles and an internship at East Los Angeles College supporting dual enrollment students, Melisa is looking forward to a career as a social worker in public schools, giving back to the community that supported her personal and career development.