Sac State freshman wins national award

Sacramento State freshman Armando Porras bested 49 other students from across the nation to receive the 2014 National Association of State Directors of Migrant Education Award during its conference April 5-6 in San Antonio.

The NASDME Award is bestowed annually to one student in the nation, and Porras was selected based on his civic participation, dedication to education and motivation to improve the experience of migrant workers and their families.

Porras, an Electrical Engineering major with a 4.0 GPA, was selected in the category for the High School Equivalency Program and College Assistance Migrant Program (CAMP), and is the first Sac State student recognized for the honor.

CAMP (www.csus.edu/camp/) provides academic advising, tutoring and counseling to the children of migrant farm workers.

“I was extremely happy that all my hard work had paid off,” Porras says of winning the award, adding that offerings such as CAMP and the Educational Opportunity Program (EOP) are a great benefit. “These leadership-teaching organizations have given me the tools to overcome obstacles and do my best in the classroom.”

Porras was 6 years old when his family emigrated from La Piedad Michoacan, Mexico, to Prunedale, a community between Santa Cruz and Monterey. He was not too involved in high school, but says CAMP helped him achieve his goals in college by introducing him to students from similar backgrounds aspiring to similar goals. “If I hang out with people who have similar goals, the chances of me achieving my goals are higher,” he says.

Now an academic success, Porras says his two younger sisters and his father are proud of his achievements. “My father told me, ‘That’s why I don’t mind working 10 hours under the sun, because you and your sisters make me proud of all my hard work.’ ”

CAMP Director Viridiana Diaz notes the role that family plays in Porras’ determination. “Armando believes that when he prioritizes school, he prioritizes his
family, and he says, ‘It is hard to think of school as hard when our parents are working in the fields.’ ”

Because his father is ill, Porras tries to get back home as often as possible. But when that’s not possible and he feels homesick, the CAMP office is there. “When I walk in the office, I immediately feel a little bit closer to home.”

He has special praise for academic counselor Elizabeth Velasquez. “She has been a great advocate, guide and friend through my first year in college,” Porras says.

He hopes to graduate in May 2018 and get a job in his field. Porras also wants to make presentations to young teenagers to encourage them to pursue a college degree. “I want them to see that if I was able to do it, so can they.”

For more information on CAMP, visit the website or call (916) 278-7241. For media assistance, call Sacramento State’s Public Affairs office at (916) 278-6156. – Craig Koscho

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