

Opening Doors for High School Students to Continue their Education at New Mexico State University

Mathematically Connected Communities (MC²) in partnership with Creative Media Institute (CMI) has been opening doors for high school students to pursue a degree at New Mexico State University and seek majors in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM); teaching; journalism; and creative media fields. MC², a New Mexico Public Education Department (PED) and Higher Education Department funded project, offers professional learning experiences for K-12 educators across our state. Now in its fourth year, MC² **MathLab™** involves elementary, middle, and high school students in a classroom lab setting that is video streamed live to teacher observation rooms. This live-feed experience provides teachers with the opportunity to learn from students while witnessing best practices and debriefing about how students think about Mathematics.

MC² staff from the College of Education and mathematicians from Arts and Sciences have been working together for 13 years and are very skilled at providing high-quality professional learning for teachers, but something was missing...placing students at the forefront of the experience. The challenge became how to provide a high-quality live video stream, while still providing excellent content and pedagogy learning for teachers. This is when CMI became involved and members of their faculty were added to the team.

To address this challenge, MC² hires high school students to assist with the video production of **MathLab™**. For the past 4 years, local students have been hired to work with **MathLab™** in Artesia, Alamogordo, Española, Las Cruces, Los Lunas, Gallup, Pojoaque, and Roswell. These students are trained by CMI faculty ahead of time to ensure that they are prepared, comfortable, and confident when they enter **MathLab™** classrooms to help MC² provide live professional learning and develop online resources.

"Serving as a student videographer for the past two years has been an awesome experience! I want to be a journalist so doing this has been amazing and I wouldn't mind doing this more years to come. I love what the MC² program does for teachers and students" – Greg King, journalism student, NMSU

As a result, two of these high school students have enrolled at NMSU and are pursuing degrees in Journalism, one student is enrolled in film school in Santa Fe, one student is pursuing a degree in Engineering, and several students are considering becoming teachers. Another student is a work-study in the College of Education and continues to provide assistance with **MathLab™**. MC² and CMI faculty and staff feel great satisfaction in their decision to involve high school students as part of the **MathLab™** team. The students' enthusiasm is contagious!

"As a high school student working in a university setting, I don't feel I'm the youngest in the crowd. It's not overwhelming. It's good to have Mitch (Fowler) as a mentor guiding my work, knowing I'm doing a good work" – Ethan Trujillo, Las Cruces Public Schools

Benefits of this Collaboration

- ❖ These experiences positively impact students, as they learn about teamwork and leadership.
- ❖ Working in a real-life setting gets students excited and interested in starting college with a positive mindset.
- ❖ Students enter as college freshman with increased confidence.
- ❖ Students have an opportunity to build relationships with faculty, who can become their mentors.
- ❖ High school students are encouraged to continue discovering and pursuing their career paths.
- ❖ Students are able to others who are not tech-savvy.
- ❖ University faculty and staff invest themselves emotionally in the success of the students.
- ❖ Students bring fresh ideas to the table.
- ❖ It is cost-effective.

For more information contact Sara Morales at smorales@nmsu.edu or Terri Sainz at tsainz@nmsu.edu.