

Computer Science and Engineering Host Alumni Panel- April 20, 2017

The engineering program hosted a panel of Montgomery College (MC) engineering alumni in April. These alumni had received scholarships from the program's first National Science Foundation (NSF) S-STEM grant, Achieving Community College Excellence, Success and Scholarship (ACCESS) in engineering.



The \$600,000 grant also provided tutoring, mentoring, and supplemental instruction for low-income students, preparing them to attend engineering programs at such institutions as the George Washington University, Georgia Tech, and the University of Maryland, College Park.

Now employed in fulfilling engineering careers or studying for advanced degrees, the alumni offered advice on how to succeed. Students were encouraged to take advantage of MC's small classes and the extra time professors give them, two bonuses not found at large universities. While students are still at

MC, they should also explore as many engineering topics as possible so that they can be sure of their intended concentrations when they transfer. In addition, they will benefit from being involved in student internships and engineering clubs, where they can make friends, develop team building skills, and create a support system that will carry through to their transfer schools.



The engineering program is now in its second \$600,000 grant of NSF S-STEM scholarships with ACCESS II. Current scholarship recipients were present during the panel discussion and had the opportunity to have dinner with the alumni that evening. The ACCESS scholarships enable student recipients to dedicate more time to their studies by alleviating the need to work extra hours to pay tuition.

The first ACCESS grant awarded scholarships to 125 engineering students from spring 2009 through spring 2013. Of those students, 86.4 percent are known to have successfully graduated or transferred to a four-year

engineering bachelor's degree program. This compares with an average graduation / transfer rate of 48 percent for all engineering majors at MC. In addition, 62 percent of these successful transfers have completed at least a bachelor's degree in engineering.

The opportunities created by the ACCESS grant benefit not only the student recipients, but all engineering and computer science students. Efforts to scale up lessons learned from ACCESS include

adding twelve new faculty advisors, and planning to bringing in Achieving the Promise coaches designated specifically to engineering and computer science.

