

## **SDSU Biochem Student Lands Dream Internship**

It's not uncommon for Jeanette Espinoza to be accused of curiosity. But when she walked into her first meeting of Santa Barbara Community College's Computer Science Club, she had no idea that this step was the beginning of the internship of her dreams: at Northrop Grumman in San Diego.

SDSU junior, Jeanette Espinoza, is now a Biochemistry major, who does computer coding as a side gig. She was hired by Northrop Grumman in San Diego, along with a team of students from USD and UCLA. Their mission: to develop a database of helicopter parts.

### ***How exactly did you find this internship?***

*I wanted to see what the Computer Science club was all about at my community college. I walked into the meeting, and people were excitedly talking about the Grace Hopper Celebration which was to be held in Atlanta. (The Grace Hopper Celebration (GHC) is the world's largest gathering of women technologists.) By the end of the meeting, I had decided I definitely wanted to attend the conference, and I successfully applied for a scholarship that night.*

*While at the conference, I connected with female technology students from all over the world. Some students from UCLA and USD were talking about an internship at Northrop Grumman in San Diego. When I returned from the conference I immediately applied for the internship, and was hired.*

### ***When did you do the internship?***

*It was a summer internship in 2020. This was the first year of COVID-19, and the company shipped remote monitors to our homes, to connect with their system while quarantined. We all used Northrup Grumman's secure teleconferencing software.*

### ***What were you hired to do?***

*We were to create a database of helicopter parts, for a specific helicopter. This database was to be used by the engineers who worked on specific components of the helicopter.*

### ***How were they keeping track of parts before you came?***

*Prior to our arrival, Northrop Grumman was using dozens of excel spreadsheets that had been printed out and passed among the engineers, dog eared and scribbled upon. When an update or*

*change needed to be made on the report, engineers had hand-written notes between the lines and in the margins. Some updates were missing. They needed an organized, accessible system.*

***Did you run into any problems?***

*Yes. Soon after we started sifting through the various printouts, we realized that we had a massive task and needed more guidance. As a team, we asked our supervisor, the Chief Engineer In Technical Ops, to identify their most critical needs so we could prioritize our work. We were then given a contact list of the engineers and the parts used by each engineer, so we could contact them directly when we had questions. Obtaining this information allowed us to talk directly with the specific engineers who used specific parts. We met them in person as well during an on-site tour to talk in person about what they needed.*

***Was the Northrop Grumman staff supportive?***

*Absolutely. The Chief Engineer answered our concerns quickly, and the engineers were happy that we were developing a parts database that would be easy for engineers to update and modify themselves. It was a wonderful, collaborative atmosphere for a first internship; even though I was working remotely I could feel the excitement when we accomplished milestones in our mission!*

**Want to search for jobs and internships? Start with SDSU Handshake**  
**<https://sacd.sdsu.edu/career/students/job-search-resources/handshake>**

**Please note the SDSU Career Center can assist with all phases of job preparation, including appointments with advisors, classes, resume writing, interviewing, and job fairs.**

**SDSU Career Services virtual front desk at :**  
**[https://sacd.sdsu.edu/career/pdfs/spring2021\\_cs\\_calendar.pdf](https://sacd.sdsu.edu/career/pdfs/spring2021_cs_calendar.pdf)**