



NEWS

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El Camino College Compton Center ASB President: Humbled & Inspired in His Position

For Joshua Jackson, serving this year as El Camino College Compton Center Associated Student Body President has been a learning, humbling and inspiring experience.

“One of the things I’ve realized is that issues you advocate for – whether to help the homeless or increase student retention – you articulate *their* needs,” the 20-year-old Carson resident said. “Often leaders look at issues as, ‘how can *I* solve them,’ but it’s a group effort, it’s not one individual. It’s been a humbling experience.”

Recently appointed to the Citizens Bond Oversight Committee, Jackson is taking on yet a new position to add to his impressive resume of student activities in his two and a half years at Compton Center. They include the First Year Experience for highly motivated students; membership in organizations such as the Multi-Cultural Alliance and Brothers and Sisters Club; and now student government as the 2016-17 ASB President. On top of all that, he works 16 hours a week in the First Year Experience office and maintains a B-plus average in his classes.

And though he has only served half his term in office, he has already chalked up several accomplishments. Perhaps his most impressive is that he and ASB Vice President Dayshawn J. Lowden convinced ECC Compton Center Provost/CEO Dr. Keith Curry to launch the Homeless Student Initiative at the beginning of the academic year.

“An hour after we were sworn in as ASB president and vice president, we brought 30 homeless students to Dr. Curry’s office so he could learn more about their problems and challenges,” Jackson said.

A free towel and soap service in the gymnasium locker rooms was the first project implemented under the initiative, and Jackson said he is hopeful that the campus will open a food pantry before the end of this school year.

In addition, the Student Homeless Task Force – which Jackson co-chairs – is reaching out to homeless students and students in need to let them know about Financial Aid, Veterans’ assistance and much more that might be available to them. In addition, the task force is examining other ways it might help students, including directing homeless students to food banks, free meal programs and temporary housing.

Jackson said the rewards of serving as ASB President often happen at a personal level. For example, he met an incoming freshman on New Student Welcome Day, which is held just before the start of the academic year, who told him he was planning to quit college even before he started because he was having difficulty registering for classes. Jackson said he helped the student enroll in classes and get a job on campus. Some weeks later, he ran into the student who told Jackson that he would have quit college if Jackson hadn’t intervened on his behalf.

A 2014 graduate of Rancho Dominguez Preparatory School in Long Beach, Jackson said he had originally planned not to go to college. One of seven children whose father is a manager at a distribution company and whose mother is a veterans claims representative, Jackson wanted to work to help support his family that had fallen on hard times. In fact, the family lost his childhood home in 2015 to foreclosure.

“But my mother told me to go to school or get out of the house,” he said.

Jackson, who will graduate this spring, has applied to transfer to UCLA, UC Berkeley and UC Irvine. He plans to major in political science and wants to be a teacher at a middle or high school in Carson upon receiving his four-year degree.

He said student services on campus have helped him tremendously, particularly Financial Aid and the EOPS program, which provides book and meal vouchers and even provide him a \$150 calculator for free that he needed for a statistics class.

Last school year, wanting to get more involved in student activities, he planned to run for the ASB Council as Commissioner on the Environment. However, after giving a presentation to last year’s ASB Council, he was encouraged by the then-ASB President to run for 2016-17 ASB President.

And now, he’s taking on an even broader role as a member of the Citizens’ Bond Oversight Committee. The role of the committee is to inform the public concerning the college district's expenditure of revenues received from the sale of bonds authorized by the voters. Members do not receive any compensation or benefits for their service.

As a student, Jackson said he has been particularly impressed and inspired by student clubs. It was through the Brothers to Sisters Club that he met many homeless students.

He praises many student organizations, including the Icebreakers Club, whose members volunteer to help out at campus events; the Formerly Incarcerated Students Transition Club, whose 63 members form the largest club on campus; and the Dreamers Club.

“The clubs really drive the agenda,” Jackson said. “And they’ll make the campus what it *will* be.”

Along with the clubs, Jackson believes getting involved in ASB is important. “If you want to see your school do better, ASB is the way to do it and make change,” he said.

“Education should not reflect what is profitable in terms of monetary gain or what will propel whatever administrator, faculty member, or student-elected leader to the next level of their career,” he said, “but what is going to teach the student what is real and honest to get them to where they need to be to provide for their family and friends, to be in service to their community, and to make our society better.

“Compton Center makes the world go around,” he continued, “and I will continue to ensure that the voice of the disenfranchised will be heard because these are my people.”

He added, “Seeing students who come here and beat the odds, that’s the best thing about Compton Center.”

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About El Camino College Compton Center

El Camino College Compton Center is the community’s education solution offering a full complement of transfer and degree courses, as well as career and technical education. Students may earn an associate degree or certificate, transfer to a four-year university or train for a career. El Camino College Compton Center is located at 1111 E. Artesia Boulevard, Compton, CA 90221.