

La Jolla High School student attends UCSD while finishing High School

April 26, 1988

Media Contact: Sandra Garrett, 534-3120

SPECIAL TO: THE LA JOLLA LIGHT

La Jolla High School Student Attends UCSD While Finishing High School Seventeen-year-old Michael Nassir gets out of high school at 2:40 p.m. and races up Torrey Pines Road to the University of California, San Diego for his French class. This is the sixth quarter that he is participating in UCSD's Early Admissions Honors Program. In this program, qualified students are allowed to take up to two college courses at UCSD while finishing high school.

"My friends from UCLA recommended that I look into UCSD's honors program," said Nassir. Nassir moved to La Jolla from Los Angeles one and a half years ago and is a student at La Jolla High School. "The best thing about the Early Admissions Honors Program is being exposed to the college experience -- this is the greatest introduction," said Nassir.

"I started attending UCSD at the beginning of 11th grade because I had finished the high school calculus program and wanted to continue studying math. At UCSD I took the honors calculus sequence, and it was definitely challenging," added Nassir.

"I come to UCSD every day for my French class. It's fairly small, but it requires a lot of work, especially in the language lab: interactive

computer programs, audio tapes and video tapes. I'm excited because I feel that I'm actually learning a lot," said Nassir.

"In order to qualify for the Early Admissions Honors Program, students need to have a 4.0 grade-point average and have completed all but 4.5 units of the University of California admissions requirements." said Liora Gutierrez, Coordinator for the Early Admissions Honors Program at UCSD.

"Students apply during the spring semester of their junior year for the following fall. This year we have 54 students, which is the largest number of participants that we've had in the program," said Gutierrez.

"We coordinate a Summer Orientation Program just for them and host them as if they were freshmen. Each college assigns an academic advisor to assist EAH students, and they work closely with them throughout their stay at UCSD. We teach them how to read the class schedule, how to fill out add/drop cards and how to look up things in the college catalog. They actually register for classes that day," said Gutierrez.

According to Gutierrez, "It used to be that students were only interested in continuing with their math, but now many students are taking courses from the social sciences, arts and humanities departments."

Michael Nassir is a good example. "I finished the honors calculus and then began with the French sequence. What I really like about this program is that it is not limited to a subject and students can take just about any class being offered," said Nassir.

According to Gutierrez, students are also getting to be heavily involved in community activities.

Therefore, Nassir's life is not limited to schools and study. "Sometimes I go to The Athenaeum, a library in La Jolla, after school and help them shelve books. On Mondays I take piano lessons and I attend Boy Scout meetings on Wednesday nights. I also tutor kids for the Strongly Oriented For Action Project. Sometimes I teach them how to read and other times I just help them do their homework before they go home. Many of them are of Latin origin, so I help them with their English," added Nassir.

"UCSD is a whole different environment and the atmosphere is definitely different. Students are here to learn -- they actually want to be here. They also don't take attendance in class, which at first struck me as strange, but I've gotten used to it," added Nassir.

"I would love to go into physics, but I'm still unsure. I'm also very interested in computer science and astronomy. I've applied to MIT, Stanford, USC, Harvey Mudd, Harvard and Cal Tech. Right now I'm leaning towards Cal Tech," said Nassir.

"I think that I eventually want to teach. I'd like to get a Ph.D and teach high school or maybe even college. I love working with kids and helping them understand things," added Nassir.

"Parents? My parents actually encourage me, they don't pressure me. I am more surprised with their lack of pressure. They are more concerned with my getting good nutritious meals and going to bed early enough so that I'm not a dish-rag the following day," said Nassir.

"I really feel privileged to participate in the EAH program. I wish that more qualified students would take advantage of it. Although I haven't been exposed to living in the dorms, the academic side is half the experience, and I feel quite prepared to go to college," said Nassir.

"We want the program to expose students to courses that expand their minds and add diversity to what is offered in their high schools," said Gutierrez. "We also want them to enjoy what they have done and let the experience be a positive one. The program is not just a stepping stone for UCSD but a stepping stone for any university in which students might enroll," added Gutierrez.

Written by: Isaac Mankita

(April 26, 1988)