

Me Myself & NASA

by Eduardo E. Castillo-Aguilar



Infront of a 1/4 scale model of the Space Shuttle

Coming from an under privileged area, my community strived to create and take every opportunity that we could in order to break away from our predetermined statistical demise. Every day was another challenge to see if we could benefit from our school, not because they did not care but because they didn't have the funds to give us the same education that students received from across town. But because we knew that a quality education would not be handed to us, teachers and staff spent significant time promoting extracurricular activities for students to turn their aspirations into reality. My love for science and math led me to join the Mathematics Engineering Science Achievement (MESA) program throughout middle school and high school. It was here where I was given guidance on how to turn something I liked into something that would lead me

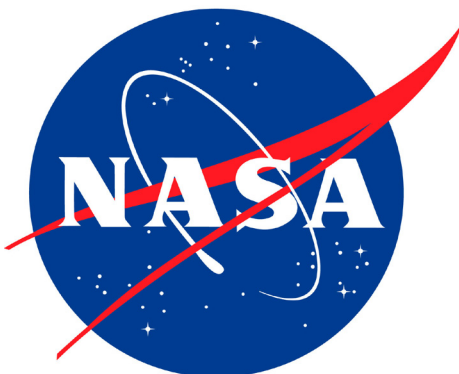
to where I couldn't imagine. Had it not been for MESA, I would have not been able to choose biomedical engineering as my major nor would I have been able to conceive the thought of being an intern at NASA Ames Research Center.

My original perception of NASA was that it was only about stars, planets, and the Space Shuttle. Once I realized that NASA had much more to contribute, I relied on my curiosity to ask questions to truly find what NASA had to offer. Through my curiosity and with the help of my mentors, I explored the extraordinary yet surprisingly unpublicized work conducted here. Through these means I was also able to meet other interns and engineers whom I have a lot of respect for.

This internship, though exciting and amazing, demanded concentration and dedication in order to finish my summer project. As I received my workload for the summer, I faced a considerable challenge in having to learn computer programming. It was like learning a new language. But rather than let it intimidate me, I was motivated to work and ask for help. My mentors guided me through the first steps and directed me to where I would be able to learn on my own

because they were preparing me for what was going to come in the near future. Through these methods I have been able to challenge my abilities.

Although my internship has lasted a few months, I feel confident that I may now go into any field with the skills that I've acquired and perform beyond expectations. I know that I have broken away from being a statistic and I hope to encourage other students like me to challenge the status quo.



Inside the 80 x 120 Wind tunnel