

Final Thoughts on the NASA Community College Aerospace Scholars Program

While living my life, milestones and benchmarks have come up. Many of these benchmarks have been the decisions I have made, which for me participating in the NASA Community College Aerospace Scholars Virtual Onsite Experience is one. This experience began approximately a year ago. I applied at the suggestion of one of my friends from MESA. After filling out my application, I was accepted two months later.

In September of 2020, I began the NASA Community College Aerospace Scholars virtual course. Our lessons included NASA's history, its missions to the moon, and its plans for the future. Our dive into materials regarding space exploration was extensive to say the least. By the end of the course, all of my fellow students and I had to complete a final project. The projects related to making space missions more feasible. For example, my project elaborated on space habitat systems.

Upon completing the course, I was accepted into the Virtual Onsite Experience. The Virtual Onsite Experience started on March 1st 2020 and ended March of this year. Overall, this program was intense and amazing. Before our experience started we were all expected to read a mission handbook. After that, we attended an orientation meeting. Unfortunately, my computer decided to do a Windows update during the meeting. Luckily, I was able to have my mom log in to my email and at my direction tell them what was going on. Later that afternoon, my computer updates finished. Consequently, I was able to make my afternoon mission meeting and meet my crew members. In NASA, teams are called crews. I also must explain that members of the NASA Community College Aerospace Scholars staff asked me not to spoil the experience by elaborating too much about it. In this first meeting we decided to make a moon mission. Additionally, it is important to know that my job was payload specialist. My duties were to collaborate with my fellow crew members and select items for our mission. Our selection criteria was very extensive. My teammates and I had to ensure that every item on our missions met specifications for mass, budget and energy. If that were not enough, we all received the opportunity to hang out with center representatives, and attend multiple professional development workshops. As I look back on my NASA Community College Aerospace Scholars Experience, I feel amazed that I completed it. More importantly, honor and a duty to pursue science wash over me like waves in the sea. Ultimately, I can say without hesitation that the NASA Community College Aerospace Scholars experience was the most promising way to understand how science and engineering are performed in the real world.