



## ILLUMINA ENGINEER MENTORS SDSU MESA/COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING STUDENTS

Ms. Michelle Davis Vargas, Quality Engineer Manager at Illumina, mentored 3 SDSU MESA/College of Engineering female students during the Fall 2018 semester.

Though Ms. Vargas is a second generation college graduate, she is first in her family to study engineering and understands the challenges students' experience. This is why she works with mentees from the MESA Program. The MESA Program supports first generation and traditionally underserved students to become diverse STEM Professionals.



Figure 1: Ms. Vargas (center) and mentees on Production Tour at Illumina

Ms. Vargas and her mentees engaged via [SDSU AMP](#) throughout the Fall 2018 semester. This culminated with a visit to Illumina where the students were given a tour of three production areas in Consumables Reagents. Students were also introduced and had the opportunity to engage with Ms. Vargas' boss, Jonita Cochran, who offered advice on entering the workforce. The group met several of Ms. Vargas' former mentees and several of her colleagues, and learned of their roles as Production Lead, Design Engineer and Process Engineer.



Figure 2: Ms. Vargas surrounded by SDSU MESA/College of Engineering mentees.

"My goal is to encourage and motivate students to graduate and help them remain focused in achieving that goal. I also provide tips and guidance on college life and professional life," shared Ms. Vargas.

**MESA** is one of the largest programs in the state to support educationally disadvantaged students to graduate from college with STEM degrees. MESA provides academic support and enrichment to more than 18,000 K-12 students and more than 7,800 community college and university students each year. For more information, visit [mep.sdsu.edu](http://mep.sdsu.edu).