

Top Tutor in Learning Center Dedicated to Role in Helping Students Succeed

The students Tahmid Rahman tutors in the Learning Center would be very surprised to know that he failed math in 9th grade. Yet the popular tutor, whose expertise is math, sees his failure in a positive light.

“At the time, I didn’t understand the concept of the pre-calculus that I tutor now,” he says. “But I wasn’t devastated by failing, it just motivated me to do better, and I got an A in 10th grade math. I learned that once you fail, you learn how to do it better.”

That is one of the many learning philosophies that Tahmid stresses to the students, along with the lessons in Math, English, Chemistry, and Physics, that makes him appear wise beyond his 23 years. It’s one of the reasons students seek him out and come back repeatedly for his help.



Tahmid began his tutoring journey at Merritt in the Disabled Services Program where he was hired by Counselor Ron Nelson. It was there that he honed his skills at helping students succeed. “Mr. Nelson trained me on how to care for people with special needs and understand difficult situations, and that really helped me to work with all students once I became a tutor at the Learning Center.”

“Tahmid is one of the most popular tutors for DSP students as well as for others who request his help,” says Ann Elliot, director of the Learning Center. “He also provides leadership among the other tutors. His outstanding academic and interpersonal skills make him a joy to work with.”

Ann’s words clearly show Tahmid’s dedication at Merritt. He puts his heart and soul into his job, often staying late to make sure a student comprehends the work and is aiming for an A. “I try to be calm and patient and understanding, but I never do a student’s work for them. I carry markers and a white board with me to show them visually how something is done. It’s important to me that when they walk out of the Learning Center, they understand it. I say, ‘I can do it for you in three minutes, but that’s not going to help you.’”

Tahmid’s organization, leadership, and communication skills started early in high school as secretary of the Science Club, organizer of 100-person tournaments for the Debate Club, leader of a team of volunteers, and goalie on his soccer team. “No one wants to be a goalie, it’s a frustrating position,” he says, “but that’s where I learned to be patient and to be a leader for the rest of my team.”

Tahmid came to the U.S. from Bangladesh on the advice of an aunt who lives in Oakland and works for Alameda County. She informed him of what a great college Merritt is, and he didn’t waste any time getting started. He arrived in December 2014 and started his first class in January 2015. He then began tutoring in March 2015 and is expected to graduate this month. In between work and classes, he managed to start the International Student Club, become a member of Phi Theta Kappa and the STEM Club, and also volunteer at the Chabot Space and Science Center. His goal is to study electrical engineering at one of the University of California campuses.

I love Merritt,” he says, “It’s nice to be on a big green campus away from the city to walk around and enjoy the beautiful view day or night. I’m proud to work at the Learning Center which is a great free service and well equipped to help students succeed.”

—Susan May