Diana Felix: [00:00](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=NsaBwoStIHeuKJUpjhuMAlbHwTkNYPuPezMOrEEjq-oIOMtPaHC5V_Dn905hiNZeEPNW8pGfAEnjX55APGJXymLxK4Y&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=0.1) The beauty of our program is, we hold the student accountable, you know, we contact them for example. If they're not enrolled one semester, we go find them. We go look for them in their classes, if they're not coming in to see us. So we're that type of program that is considered intrusive for our students, I think. But I think for a lot of our students who are the first ones in their family to navigate higher education to, you know, be at an institution, especially this large as Mt. SAC, it can get overwhelming, of how do you do it? What questions do I even ask? So I think we alleviate some of that stress from the students when they come into our center.

Liesel Reinhart: [00:34](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=NsaBwoStIHeuKJUpjhuMAlbHwTkNYPuPezMOrEEjq-oIOMtPaHC5V_Dn905hiNZeEPNW8pGfAEnjX55APGJXymLxK4Y&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=34.72) We're so glad that you're still joining us over the summer wherever you may be, at the beach, in the mountains, or just jamming on Netflix. But we're glad that you found a couple of minutes to still join us for this podcast, this special summer series that we're bringing to you to get to better know some of your students, and to come back refreshed and ready for another great year in the fall. Enjoy the summer Magic Mountie Podcast.

Liesel Reinhart: [01:02](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=NsaBwoStIHeuKJUpjhuMAlbHwTkNYPuPezMOrEEjq-oIOMtPaHC5V_Dn905hiNZeEPNW8pGfAEnjX55APGJXymLxK4Y&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=62.07) Liesel Reinhart here with your co-host ...

Christina Barsi: [01:02](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=NsaBwoStIHeuKJUpjhuMAlbHwTkNYPuPezMOrEEjq-oIOMtPaHC5V_Dn905hiNZeEPNW8pGfAEnjX55APGJXymLxK4Y&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=62.07) Christina Barsi-

Liesel Reinhart: [01:07](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=NsaBwoStIHeuKJUpjhuMAlbHwTkNYPuPezMOrEEjq-oIOMtPaHC5V_Dn905hiNZeEPNW8pGfAEnjX55APGJXymLxK4Y&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=67.34) And we're both blonde right now, that means it's summer. For this special summer episode, we are visiting one of Mt. SAC's really cool programs, ACES. It's an acronym, and neither one of us remembers what it is, but you're going to find out about it today. But the most important thing is, that it's a really cool student support program here at Mt. SAC that faculty need to know about, so that we can help all of our students who are first-time college students and their family spread the love and start making new generations of Mt. SAC students. Stay tuned.

Diana Felix: [01:43](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=NsaBwoStIHeuKJUpjhuMAlbHwTkNYPuPezMOrEEjq-oIOMtPaHC5V_Dn905hiNZeEPNW8pGfAEnjX55APGJXymLxK4Y&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=103.04) My name is Diana Felix, and I'm the faculty counselor coordinator for the ACES program here at Mt. San Antonio College, Mt. SAC. The ACES program is an acronym, and it stands for Achieving in College, Ensuring Success. And what I do, is I serve as the counselor and also as a coordinator for the program, where I see students and I also plan day-to-day activities and then also activities for the semester and for the year. But you know, I'm a counselor, so I also see students based on helping them with their academic needs as well.

Diana Felix: [02:16](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=NsaBwoStIHeuKJUpjhuMAlbHwTkNYPuPezMOrEEjq-oIOMtPaHC5V_Dn905hiNZeEPNW8pGfAEnjX55APGJXymLxK4Y&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=136.04) One of the first conversations we have is, "Okay great, after you transfer from here and you get your Bachelor's degree, are you going to get the Master's? Are you going to get a doctorate?" So, some of our students get very overwhelmed. Like, "Whoa, I'm just trying to figure out transfer. I'm trying to just figure out the Associate's degree." But because we're really trying to plant the seed of showing them that trajectory of higher education, you know, what is possible because these students are coming from families where they don't have anybody in their families that have gone to college that can share this knowledge, that can pass this information down to them. Therefore, it's important that they have this program as that support system.

Student: [02:52](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=NsaBwoStIHeuKJUpjhuMAlbHwTkNYPuPezMOrEEjq-oIOMtPaHC5V_Dn905hiNZeEPNW8pGfAEnjX55APGJXymLxK4Y&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=172.73) So, I always say that ACES is our hub, right? So we have a program that's specifically for first-generation students. And it's a safe space for us to kind of interact and talk about our challenges and similar struggles that we've gone through as first-generation college students. I think for the Upward Bound program, it is also for low-income students, so that gives them a safe space and the tools that they need to succeed.

Raj Mahotra: [03:15](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=NsaBwoStIHeuKJUpjhuMAlbHwTkNYPuPezMOrEEjq-oIOMtPaHC5V_Dn905hiNZeEPNW8pGfAEnjX55APGJXymLxK4Y&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=195.83) My name is Raj Mahotra. I would like to share my background story. So how I found this program was actually pretty amazing, because when I got here from high school, I don't know what to do and how the school system works. So I was just struggling to take classes. I didn't know like there's a counselor that I can meet and set up in my classes and what to take. So I was running around taking any random classes that weren't related to my major. For example, I was passing by a classroom and it was a class going on, so I just stepping in and I found out it was a political science class. My major was computer science, so it was no way related, but I just stepped in because I wanted to have something. I was so lost, so-

Liesel Reinhart: [04:02](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=NsaBwoStIHeuKJUpjhuMAlbHwTkNYPuPezMOrEEjq-oIOMtPaHC5V_Dn905hiNZeEPNW8pGfAEnjX55APGJXymLxK4Y&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=242.73) You were literally adding classes by just looking at open doors?

Raj Mahotra: [04:06](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=NsaBwoStIHeuKJUpjhuMAlbHwTkNYPuPezMOrEEjq-oIOMtPaHC5V_Dn905hiNZeEPNW8pGfAEnjX55APGJXymLxK4Y&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=246.32) That's true. So for the first week, I wouldn't have like even a seat, because I didn't know how to register or to be even in the waiting list. So I was just sitting on the floor taking notes and just hoping to get an add code so I can show up to the class starting next week. So it was, at the moment, it was pretty sad too, because it was keeping me away from my major. So, I just ... someone told me like, "Why don't you talk to a counselor?" So I went to the building 9C and I met with a counselor. She said like, "The classes you are taking are not even related, so what's going on with you? Why aren't you making regular appointments with the counselor?" I was like, "No, this is my first time like actually seeing a counselor, so I don't know how it works."

Raj Mahotra: [04:49](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=NsaBwoStIHeuKJUpjhuMAlbHwTkNYPuPezMOrEEjq-oIOMtPaHC5V_Dn905hiNZeEPNW8pGfAEnjX55APGJXymLxK4Y&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=289.61) After that sessions, she recommended me to go to ACES program and check that out, "Because it's going to help you out, and you going to have a counselors that are dedicated to the program, and they going to keep track of you basically." Because that's what I needed, because I didn't had any support or friends, so I don't know what to do.

Raj Mahotra: [05:08](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=NsaBwoStIHeuKJUpjhuMAlbHwTkNYPuPezMOrEEjq-oIOMtPaHC5V_Dn905hiNZeEPNW8pGfAEnjX55APGJXymLxK4Y&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=308.13) So when I was introduced to the ACES program, that's the first time I found out, "Okay, with the computer science, these are the classes that I have to take and step up." So ever since, I was able to be a full-time student, which helped me financially later as well. From that point, I was got onto the right path and getting more involved, because the ACES program, that's the one thing they do is like make you stand on your toes and be involved and do whatever it takes to be a college student. Now, I mean, I never thought that I would be transferring and going to the UCR and that's it literally coming true, because of the ACES program, so I'm really thankful.

Elizabeth: [05:48](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=NsaBwoStIHeuKJUpjhuMAlbHwTkNYPuPezMOrEEjq-oIOMtPaHC5V_Dn905hiNZeEPNW8pGfAEnjX55APGJXymLxK4Y&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=348.77) So my name is Elizabeth, and I'm the administrative specialist for the ACES program. I was a first-generation low-income student in my undergrad, so I definitely know what it feels like to not have families that have gone through college or not have families that are necessarily supportive of your educational goals. So I definitely see in our students a lot of like that same kind of like experience. So I feel like it's our job to really create a space where students feel welcome, where students feel challenged, checked. I always joke around with them, "The chanclas coming for you." But it's that accountability that they might not be experiencing with their families, 'cause their families don't know how to support them. So I think for us, it's got to be, yes, love. But sometimes it's got to be firm love. So I do feel part of that is creating a space from literally the moment you enter, so knowing every single student's name, making a point to track them down. "Are you a friend? Who are you? Welcome. Do you want to apply?" To just every single thing, and being really attentive, but also understanding that students are coming in with all kinds of things impacting their daily lives. So I think being extremely welcoming, even as the front counter support. But it has to go from, even from our director to our counselors, down to the front counter support. You have to create an entire structure that is absolutely made out of love and support to really make it function. So I think that's why we're at a place where, I don't really need to do a lot of recruitment, 'cause students are kind of like our best kind of recruitment.

Elizabeth: [07:14](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=NsaBwoStIHeuKJUpjhuMAlbHwTkNYPuPezMOrEEjq-oIOMtPaHC5V_Dn905hiNZeEPNW8pGfAEnjX55APGJXymLxK4Y&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=434.12) So that's really a great place, but on the side, I do accept applications. I do love it when faculty members make recommendations to our program, because we're always growing. So and that's the really good thing.

Diana Felix: [07:25](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=NsaBwoStIHeuKJUpjhuMAlbHwTkNYPuPezMOrEEjq-oIOMtPaHC5V_Dn905hiNZeEPNW8pGfAEnjX55APGJXymLxK4Y&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=445.92) Since the inception of the program, which was in 2010, we have transferred 178 students. These are the students that are, I think, some of the most lost and confused students on our campus, the ones that can't turn to family to help them navigate the system of higher education. These are first-generation low-income students, and we have about 42% of Mt. SAC students who are first-generation college students. So, unfortunately, we can't help everyone. So there is definitely a need here on this campus to grow the program. So I feel it's always about funding, right? So I think one of the things that we've been very fortunate to tap into has been the student equity funds that have been coming through Mt. SAC. So we've been able to now kind of expand our services a little bit more, because our funding, even though we're very grateful for it, has a lot of restrictions and things that we can and cannot do with the funding. So we're able to get a little bit more creative and expand our services more with funds from the campus, that the campus is providing for us.

Liesel Reinhart: [08:31](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=NsaBwoStIHeuKJUpjhuMAlbHwTkNYPuPezMOrEEjq-oIOMtPaHC5V_Dn905hiNZeEPNW8pGfAEnjX55APGJXymLxK4Y&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=511.62) You also came from a family, I assume since you're here, where no one else had gone to college?

Student: [08:36](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=NsaBwoStIHeuKJUpjhuMAlbHwTkNYPuPezMOrEEjq-oIOMtPaHC5V_Dn905hiNZeEPNW8pGfAEnjX55APGJXymLxK4Y&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=516.81) Yes. No one in my family has gone to college. Neither of my parents. I only have a father who graduated high school, and my mother didn't. So it was a struggle throughout. I didn't get much help when I was like in grade school. Then getting to college with the programs, they've also helped me letting my parents know like how the system works and also guiding my younger siblings that it's not just I who's always going to be, it's like the whole family is going to be in this together. We've all grown and supported one another afterwards.

Raj Mahotra: [09:21](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=NsaBwoStIHeuKJUpjhuMAlbHwTkNYPuPezMOrEEjq-oIOMtPaHC5V_Dn905hiNZeEPNW8pGfAEnjX55APGJXymLxK4Y&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=561.66) Coming from high school to college with having no background information and no support, it was pretty challenging that I was lost. So the ACES program is actually my family that helped me succeed. Because of them, I'm thankful and I always talk to my parents about it that once I leave this house, I go to school, I have another house over there where I go to and feel welcomed and have all the support that I need to be succeed.

Raj Mahotra: [09:49](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=NsaBwoStIHeuKJUpjhuMAlbHwTkNYPuPezMOrEEjq-oIOMtPaHC5V_Dn905hiNZeEPNW8pGfAEnjX55APGJXymLxK4Y&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=589.67) Coming from first-generation college student and with the low income, because my mom is housewife and my dad works at the low wage. So I don't have that luxury that could help me like be successful, so I remember when I graduated from high school, coming to college was ... My dad asked me like, "What gift do you want?" And that was the first time I got my own personal computer, which was not the best at that time, but at least I had something to do homework with. It was pretty emotional moment for me. So once I got to ACES program, I was able to use their tech stuff and their computers. They also helped me with textbooks as well, because I didn't have the money to get those textbooks. So they always loaned out and for the semester, and be able to take that advantage. So I'm really thankful for that.

Liesel Reinhart: [10:44](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=NsaBwoStIHeuKJUpjhuMAlbHwTkNYPuPezMOrEEjq-oIOMtPaHC5V_Dn905hiNZeEPNW8pGfAEnjX55APGJXymLxK4Y&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=644.31) So what is your dream that you would like to do for your parents? What would you like to be able to do for them?

Raj Mahotra: [10:49](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=NsaBwoStIHeuKJUpjhuMAlbHwTkNYPuPezMOrEEjq-oIOMtPaHC5V_Dn905hiNZeEPNW8pGfAEnjX55APGJXymLxK4Y&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=649.25) Oh, when I have my [inaudible 00:10:51] job, I would like to just bring that check and give it to my mom. The first one. Then probably buy my dad a dream car, whatever the car he likes. And then eventually sooner or later get a house for ourself.

Liesel Reinhart: [11:06](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=NsaBwoStIHeuKJUpjhuMAlbHwTkNYPuPezMOrEEjq-oIOMtPaHC5V_Dn905hiNZeEPNW8pGfAEnjX55APGJXymLxK4Y&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=666.98) Hey, thanks so much for joining us for the Magic Mountie Podcast. We love your likes, we love your shares, and we love your comments. So please engage with our community, download from wherever you love to get your podcasts, iTunes, Google, Rate My Professor, we're there. We want you to be back with us next week. Remember, any opinions that are expressed in this podcast do not necessarily represent Mt. San Antonio College or any of its agents. We'll see you next time.