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Dedication and hard work lead to opportunity

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For the last six weeks, Lisbeth Murrugarra, a recent W.H. Adamson High School graduate, has worked with the IT Situational Awareness Engineering (SAE) team at American Airlines. As an intern, she has helped to enhance synthetic monitoring of applications to proactively alert application teams of potential issues and help reduce customer impact. Simply said, if something goes wrong on the American Airlines system, SAE would know in real time and be able to address immediately.

The group of Adamson interns worked in tandem with teams in several departments focused in STEM: IT Help Desk, aa.com and Delivery Transformation Business Intelligence. Lisbeth, a first-generation college student, has a passion for technology and aspires to become a software engineer after completing her coursework at University of Texas at Arlington and this first-of-its-kind opportunity for recent high school graduates is helping her with her future career in engineering.

"When I first heard the news that I had been accepted into the program, I knew it was the right next step for me," she said. "I was somewhat anxious to get started, after having a delayed start due to the pandemic. But, after I arrived on campus and felt the genuine care from my colleagues, I was excited to dive right in and get to work."

The internship program is part of a larger partnership with Dallas Independent School District, Dallas County Community College and IBM to support Adamson's Pathways in Technology Early College High Schools (P-TECH) program and is American's first-ever high school internship program. Through P-TECH, Adamson students can earn a two-year associate degree and a high school diploma in four years. The internship program provides a hands-on introduction to STEM careers and helps bridge the gap between classroom instruction and professional experience.

"Over the course of the last four years, we've worked hand-in-hand with P-Tech program participants to provide professional opportunities to a diverse group of high school students and recent graduates," American's Chief

Information Officer Maya Leibman said. "It is incredibly gratifying to see Lisbeth and her fellow cohort develop throughout the program."

The P-TECH students worked onsite at American's Robert L. Crandall Campus in Fort Worth, Texas, where they supported a variety of business initiatives spanning information technology, coding, engineering and artificial intelligence. Each project the team was tasked with was aimed at achieving improvements and innovations to both customer and team member experience.

This week, the internship class presented their final projects. For all of her work and dedication, Lisbeth was awarded a $5,000 scholarship to apply toward her education as she pursues her bachelor's degree. Additionally, she is being extended a part-time employment offer while she obtains her degree.

"Since enrolling in the P-TECH program, I've dreamed about earning my bachelor's degree," Lisbeth said. "I feel encouraged knowing that as I continue my educational journey, I have a huge family in the American Airlines team supporting me and cheering me on every step of the way."

The first-of-its-kind internship program, focusing primarily on high school students and recent graduates, has provided unique opportunities for young adults to receive special focus and guidance in solidifying their interest in the technology and aviation professions alike.

"I'm incredibly proud of what Lisbeth and the intern class has accomplished in such a brief period of time," said Jim Catlin, IT Manager for American. "The scholarship and sustained investment in Lisbeth's professional development serves as a reminder of how beneficial internship programs are at ensuring students are one step closer to obtaining their dream careers."

American has a longstanding history of participating in initiatives such as this internship program that help introduce students to STEM careers in the aviation space. The airline also provides maintenance hangar tours for students, hosts hackathons for aspiring IT professionals and provides aviation-themed summer camp opportunities for young people at the **CR Smith Museum.**

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