

As a foster youth, I faced many challenges during my high school years but had a stable life because I was placed with relatives. I was successful in gaining admission to a four-year university, but struggled financially to fund my undergraduate education. During college, I worked part-time as an assistant track and field and cross country coach at Upland High School and as a student assistant to the coordinator of the Latin American Studies Department at CSUF. Fortunately, I did well in my studies and my brother and I are the first in our family to graduate college.

At CSU Fullerton, I was able to take a campus leadership role, serving as president of the Latin American Studies Student Association for academic year 2010-2011. During this time, in addition to my duties as president, I also served as the organization's representative to the Association for InterCultural Awareness (AICA), a broader based organization that serves as a campus instrument of student opinion, multicultural leadership, diversity education, and advocacy. AICA has the important responsibility of allocating Associated Students Inc. (ASI) funds to member organizations to provide multicultural programming.

My participation in this organization included creating event budget proposals, advocating for pressing social issues on campus and in the larger society and educating fellow student members and the community about various issues of importance in Latin American culture. I also collaboratively organized a number of major events including the "Rally Against Hate", "MultiCultural Taste", and "Culture Couture". These events helped us spread awareness about hate crimes and also promoted open-minds toward cultural foods and fashions that are represented by many CSU Fullerton students.

My most important contribution to AICA and the Fullerton campus was leading and coordinating the annual Latin American Studies Student Conference, enabling students across many disciplines to present research on various topics related to Latin America. As a graduate student at UC Davis, I hope to find ways to participate in a similar organization or make a contribution to students' awareness of multi-cultural issues in other ways.

While enrolled at RCC, I participated as a track and field athlete. After experiencing injury the first season, I filed as a medical red-shirt, attended rehabilitation training, and returned the following season to perform well beyond my expectations. I finished my track and field career competing at the California Community College Championship Meet in San Mateo, California in May 2013.

Thereafter, I wanted to improve my Spanish language skills so I moved to Spain to work as an English Language Assistant for the Ministry of Education, Culture, and Sport. I worked at two primary schools, taught private lessons and arranged an informal Spanish lesson each day with native speakers to ensure my improvement. During weekends I was able to develop my understanding of the history, culture and language of the country by traveling with friends to many cities on the eastern side of Spain. On holiday breaks, I travelled alone to Paris, Berlin, and Rome. This experience helped me develop

independence and taught me about the beauty in diversity, as well as exposing me to some of the challenges of the European-life experience.

Work abroad led to work with AmeriCorps VISTA and my interest in educational issues, particularly the students who I see struggling everyday. My intention in returning to graduate school is to increase my expertise in educational policy and improve my abilities to help disadvantaged students. Given my own background, I believe I can serve as a role model to children from disadvantaged backgrounds and my graduate education will provide the necessary tools and expertise to make a difference in their lives.