

My journey as a college student is something that I have never been certain about. I never knew what I wanted to be when I grew up, let alone even imagined myself pursuing higher education. I started off in community college not because I didn't view myself as smart enough for a university, but because I did not know what bachelor's degree I was ready to pursue. I changed my major four times before deciding that I wanted to earn my bachelor's degree in Spanish. Today I find myself more passionate and excited than ever to be pursuing a degree that is challenging, yet something I am genuinely interested in.

Growing up in California, the Spanish language has always been a part of the world around but never directly involved with my immediate family and friends. Of course, I had friends and distant relatives that spoke Spanish, but being a fourth-generation Mexican-American, I was accustomed to American culture and was raised speaking English. I always was interested in the Spanish language, but it wasn't until the seventh grade that I was given the opportunity to learn the language. Once I started learning Spanish nothing could stop me, I continued my Spanish language education all the way up to eleventh grade, where I then completed the Advanced Placement Course and received the seal of biliteracy. Unfortunately, at the time, I did not continue my Spanish language development and I began to focus more on psychology and the social sciences that were said to be more lucrative. Through a series of trial and error with different undergrad courses, I came to my senses and decided to pursue my bachelor's degree in Spanish.

I chose California State University Monterey Bay because of the educational opportunities and the fact that the location is so close to where I grew up as a child and I wanted to give back to the community, and eventually I will pursue my teaching degree at CSUMB as well because I want to teach in this community. So far, I am very satisfied with the classes and my experience in the classroom and the surrounding community with the upper division service learning course. I see my Spanish skills improving because of CSUMB's productive environment. This has allowed me to go into the community to practice my Spanish skills. I am now able to navigate and use the Spanish language more effectively and I know that my fluency will keep improving.

My goal in pursuing my bachelor's degree in Spanish Language and Hispanic Culture is to provide the gateway into pursuing the California single subject teaching credential in order to

become a high school Spanish teacher. I have always wanted to become a high school or middle school teacher, I just didn't know what subject I was going to receive my bachelor's degree. I now know that the Spanish language and Hispanic cultures are the optimum subjects to teach because they open the student's minds to a global perspective on cultures, but also the language that comes along with it. I enjoy the technicalities and structure of the language, but the cultural context and practice of the language has been very eye-opening for me and made me more appreciative of language and the people who use it in their daily life.

In short, my journey to and through CSU Monterey Bay has been a very positive and has opened the doors to allow me to pursue my dream of being a teacher.

AREA	GRADE
Personal Biography (2)	2
Connection to studies/interest in the field (2)	2
Rationale for majoring in Spanish (2)	2
Goals for personal & professional development (2)	2
Completion of assignment (2)	1.5
Grade	9.5

