

My name is Citlalie Del Carmen Tello, I'm a fourth year Spanish Major at CSU Monterey Bay and a first-generation Mexican American student finding her way through life! I have a GPA of 3.42 and during the 4 years I have attended CSUMB I have made the Dean's list 5 times. Being in college is a personal achievement of mine because I am the first person in my family to obtain a higher education. I had very little support or help from others and had to make my own appointments, choices, and ask as many questions as I could in order to know what was required and where to go. During my senior year of high school my parents were too busy with the nine-year aftershock of their divorce to guide me in any shape or form. My counselor never met with me to check on my college application progress either, and I had little to no direction to go in. I was walking in a fog not knowing where to go, but I knew that if I wanted my life to be better, I would need to take initiative and figure things out on my own.

Once in college, adapting to a new lifestyle and learning to live on my own was extremely difficult with the miniscule budget that I had. Neither of my parents could support me financially but I was fortunate enough to obtain enough financial aid to pay tuition. Even so, paying off bills, supporting my mother, and affording food was still a preoccupation on my mind. This led me to apply for a part time job, which gave me my first experience earning and handling money. While trying to balance the stresses of life such as school, family disputes, and work, I was certainly kept busy. All this stress caused my grades to suffer, but I managed to pull through and bring my GPA back where it needed to be. I was not going to allow myself to fail after making it this far. That's when I knew that I was figuring it all out.

I obtained my first job at Target as a cashier. Although I was 18, and it was my first job, within a year I was promoted to customer services and eventually training to become a guest services team leader. I gained a lot of great experience and learned a wide spectrum of qualities that are required to provide high customer satisfaction. Because of the diverse population at the Target I worked in, I was exposed to many learning opportunities through the interactions made with customers. I gained better listening skills, persuasion skills and even patience when handling a customer that required more effort in fulfilling their needs. Once surpassing my job at Target and making it into management at the age of 19, I decided it was time to change my work experience to something that was out of my comfort zone. I applied at In-N-Out burger and was successfully hired out of the masses of competition. Surprisingly, here I refined much of my customer service skills beyond what would typically be expected at Target. From what I've gained, I can emphasize the significance of communication skills, self awareness, teamwork, and the importance of quality. Customer satisfaction is highly prioritized, and through the many skills mentioned previously, we push out as many meals as possible without compromising the quality of our product. In-N-Out provides many opportunities to grow and move up in management. My experience here has been very positive and it has helped me get through my academic career.

Regarding community service, I've had the pleasure of participating in service learning (SL) on three different occasions. The first had an emphasis on teaching in modern society. My location was at Monterey Bay Charter School where I jointly worked with a first grade teacher helping students with their class work, and interacting with them during recess. I was expected to critically analyze the different styles of teachings carried out by the school and use the material learned in class to explain why it is an effective method of teaching and learning. In my second experience of SL through Digital Public Art, I was given the tools necessary to help the community in a way that I never experienced before. We helped a local organization, the Center for Community Advocacy (CCA), in Salinas to promote a variety of resources offered to

undocumented immigrants, farmworkers and first generation students. One of their most current and significant projects was to promote universal healthcare and assist undocumented farm workers in accessing care. In support of their cause, my group members and I interviewed local doctors and CCA advocates to gain a deeper understanding of the issue. We created a commercial with the material acquired and I transcribed the information into Spanish subtitles so that the video could inform both English and Spanish speaking audiences. In my third experience, SL in the Latino Community provided me with a more diverse interaction of age groups. I worked as a teacher assistant at the Dual Language Academy for the length of a semester. I aided a first grade teacher, 8th grade teacher, and an after school ESL program for adults. Each age group was a unique interaction according to the level of language proficiency. I was honored to help in any way whenever a student or adult needed assistance with their task at hand. I really enjoyed explaining concepts in more than one way to better make a point come across and most importantly help them develop their ability to communicate.

I have many goals involving personal growth and a desire to become a well rounded person through experiences. Through an organization called breaking the lens, I learned to think about my own identity, desires, and what has shaped me into the person I am today. By presenting poetry and photography to the community about myself, I gained a creative insight about what it is that I wish to accomplish in life. Because of the many adversities faced in the past, my personal goals were something I neglected to think about before. Now I know that one of my dreams is to study abroad and to travel the world so that I can learn about different cultures first hand. I crave adventure, and there are so many things I want to do and see that I have had to put off while prioritize my education and responsibilities as an adult. This would better help me reach a higher understanding of how to help people from different backgrounds and also learn about different methodologies of approaching problems. I wish to accomplish this prior to graduating so that I can satiate my hunger and better focus on my professional goals.

At a young age, I translated court documents for my mother and for people we met during our stays in shelters protecting domestic violence victims. Thankfully, I learned English and Spanish fluently and have never struggled in expressing myself in either language. I have translated countless letters addressed to district attorneys and lawyers that were taking advantage of peoples lack of knowledge. I never said no to any of my mother's requests or to the request of her acquaintances that needed help. I knew how important it was to be the bridge of understanding between these women, their lawyers, and the shelter staff. The simple task of translating made a difference in custody battles, restraining orders and even motivating lawyers into doing their job accordingly. It is for these reasons, upon completing my degree, I intend to become a translator with the ultimate goal of working with letters and documents for people that do not have the resources needed to learn or understand English and ultimately translate in courtrooms.