

My undergraduate experience has allowed me to learn who I want to become. My parents left me with another family who was paid to sign my legal documents ever since I was born. No one listened when I had problems; I never knew I could make a difference. When I entered college I was able to find a group of friends who surrounded me, but I still lacked a structured support system. My advisor challenged me when I hit a roadblock and supported me during my lowest points. It was because of my advisor that I realized that I mattered. I can only dream that I will be able to make this big of an impact on other individuals in the future. With the help of a graduate education, I look forward to the opportunity to reflect on my abilities and passions to learn more about myself and establish any necessary skills needed to progress in the field.

A reflection of my work as the Associate Vice President of Student Services in the Associated Students where I worked with other students led to my consideration of an alternate career--something other than the biology track I had always been on. Suddenly, a career in student affairs began to seem very appealing to me. The lens was focused when I reviewed my interests as an undergraduate fellow in the NASPA Undergraduate Fellowship Program (NUFP) under the Director of Associated Students Administration, Heather Belk. Heather worked with me to begin basic foundations of leadership development and management, create a Transfer Mentorship Program through needs-based assessment, and, interact with different levels of student affair officers, turning my interest into a goal.

After reflecting on my experiences as an undergraduate, it became clear to me that my ultimate calling was for advising and leadership development. As of now, I hope to work with student leaders and foster leadership and develop students who will also engage in ethical decision making skills and other opportunities in their undergraduate experience ultimately preparing them for the field they want to go into.

In pursuing graduate education I believe I will be able to explore and strengthen areas where I can most serve students. I now realize that my original passion for the arts and sciences stem from my interest in critical-thinking and problem solving. I believe I will be able to grow as an individual and become more aware of my role in others' growth and development. I look forward to attending a program that will allow me to challenge myself and offer me an opportunity to engage with a cohort that share the same vision of enriching the college experience. I do this to gain what my advisors, mentors, and supervisors have gained through their graduate programs and develop the skills needed to become a practitioner in the field of student affairs--in order to develop students and leaders who will enact positive change for society at large.