College was always the dream. My mom taught me that education is a privilege that would open doors and grant me rare opportunities that I would not be able to pursue otherwise, including college itself. I am the first in my family to go to college, making me a first-generation female Mexican American. This is a great personal and familial achievement that brings with it some unfair expectations attached to it. I have to excel in every class I take and can never get a grade lower than a B because I am an example for my younger family members, specifically my younger brother.

After being accepted to CSUMB, I decided to major in Biology in the hopes to become a nurse practitioner in pediatrics because I wanted to work with kids and to make my family proud. As I started my first semester, it did not take long for it to hit me that I was not going to be happy pursuing something that was being heavily influenced by family. I can remember being in my room and wondering what I was going to major in if I was not going to pursue Biology, after some research, some crying and a bit of soul searching it clicked. I wanted to become a Spanish major, wanting to further my knowledge of my own culture and language. After finalizing that decision to switch my major I called my mom in tears because I did not want to disappoint her, during that call she told me that she was forever proud of me and would support me no matter what.

Packing up and moving to Monterey taught me some valuable lessons that I plan to take with me after I graduate. It has taught me that family will always be there and support any dream that I may have, as long as I continue with my studies. That I should not let others dictate my educational path for me, that I am in control of my own fate. Hard work is only half of the equation of being successful, I need a concrete circle of support and opportunities available. Also, that moving away from my hometown of San Diego was the best decision I made because it allowed for personal growth and independence.

After I graduate with my B.A. in Spanish Language and Hispanic Cultures, I have plans to further my education by getting my M.A. in physical therapy. The reason that I decided on that was due to personal experience that I have with physical therapy. I, myself, have needed it due to surgery and my grandma needed it due to health reasons but I noticed that that experience that I had compared to my grandma was completely different due to the fact that I spoke English and my grandma spoke Spanish. In my case it was a smooth experience that I could somewhat enjoy while for my grandma it was a difficult experience. For me that was a turning point because I realized that there weren't many physical therapists that spoke Spanish, something that my grandma would have benefitted from. I wanted to be the bridge between those that needed physical therapy and weren’t able to obtain due to a language barrier.