*Personal Statement*

 “Why are you studying Spanish? Don’t you already know how to speak it?” Believe it or not this question is one which the majority of students of Hispanic descent pursuing a degree in Spanish hear all too often. To me the answer is simple, if you love your culture why not learn more about it?

 I grew up in Mexico and Spanish was the first language I knew. At a young age I moved to the United States and I was lucky enough to be old enough to have a strong grasp of the Spanish language but young enough to easily learn English. Adapting to a new country, a new culture, and a new language wasn’t easy. This experience prepared to live in a multicultural society and it made me respect people from all backgrounds.
 When I first came to California State University at Monterey Bay, I knew that I would find a place where I could learn more about my culture and expand my knowledge and understanding. One of the things I looked forward to the most was actively participating in the community and seeing the relationship between the university and the diverse population it serves. I am glad that we have faculty focuses not solely on academic pursuits but also make social justice an important part of the curriculum.

 My time here has had a profound effect on me, I began my studies here as an environmental science major but I quickly found my calling in the Spanish program. Once I graduate I plan to continue my studies and pursue a post-graduate degree in Latin American studies. One day I will be a professor and I hope to instill the same values that I have learned here in my students.