

Personal Statement

I started studying language from a young age as part of my general education. Learning about other countries and the Spanish language sparked a deep interest in me to spend every high school year in a language classroom. My interest became my major in college, and I earned an AA in Spanish. I arrived at an orientation for CSUMB's prospective students to hear about their Spanish BA program and heard instead about their Japanese program. I chose to take a path less traveled, and I switched over to Japanese for study at CSUMB.

At CSUMB I have learned Japanese language and culture, but I have also learned about countries beyond Japan. I have studied the politics surrounding various countries, such as: China, Vietnam, Phillipines, and South Korea. And when I took the opportunity to study abroad at Okayama University in Okayama, Japan in 2014, I expanded upon that information, with topics about Family and Gender in Japan, Anthropology in Asia, and Sociolinguistics in the World.

During my stay in Okayama, I took the opportunity to speak with locals about in their language, to expand upon my speaking skills and to learn more about their culture. I spoke with students at the university and strangers on the streets, who were often eager to share a little of their own culture with a visitor. I even discovered that many residents of Japan are descended from, or immigrated from another country. There were many Japanese people descended from China, Korea, Vietnam and India, who shared in a similar culture as the Japanese people, but with their own heritage placed in it. The situation for immigrants in Japan is neither a simple issue nor an easy-to-solve one, as there are not many laws in Japan protecting immigrants and descendants of immigrants. Inspired by the people I met, I began studying Tourism and Immigration for a paper I was writing for the EPOK program, with which I was studying in Okayama. After having completed the project, I feel I have only scratched the surface of what Japan's immigrants' and immigrant descendants' situation is. I

wish to know more and to delve deeper into the issue, which has inspired me to make immigration the theme of my Capstone topic.

After graduation from CSUMB, I want to expand on my knowledge with experience in teaching. As a passionate learner, I find education and learning new information to be fascinating, and I enjoy serving others in learning something new about the world. During my work in the Service Learning Program from CSUMB, I worked with children, teaching them Japanese language and culture, and making connections with them as people. It has inspired me to teach, especially to teach foreign and secondary language. With this goal in mind, I am applying to the JET program, to become an assistant English teacher in Japan. With the experience, I will be able to expand upon my Japanese speaking skills, learn more about the culture, work with kids, and teach a secondary language.