

time. You don't have to attend classes, but you must face the consequences such as having to make up the work or receive a poor grade. In high school, if you missed classes, your teacher would probably give you demerits or even telephone your parents at home. Here you are treated like an adult. Also, at the university, there are no warning bells or teachers to remind you to go to classes. You have to be mature enough to keep track of your own class schedule, knowing the times and places that your classes meet. The responsibility and freedom to determine my own actions was a big transition for me!

Are there any drawbacks or advantages to having older students in the classroom with you?

In a way, there are both advantages and disadvantages. I learn from older students who make my classes more interesting, challenging, and at times intimidating. I sometimes want to draw back and listen to what the older students have to say because I feel they might know more than I do. But what I've learned is that age really doesn't matter. You just have to do your best. Your classmates may be older, but they're in that classroom to learn the same material.

Is there anything about the university that you didn't expect?

Yes, I was surprised at how open-minded the teachers are. They often simply speak out on issues, problems, or feelings that are on their minds. In high school, you didn't hear teachers speaking out so freely. Back there, you didn't usually hear teachers kidding around, swearing, or casually discussing issues. At first, when I heard this type of teacher-student interaction, it came as a real shock, especially when professors joked with their students. The biggest difference in the interpersonal contact between professors and students is that professors treat you

like an adult. To me the informal teaching approach is appropriate because professors can communicate with you better.

What general education classes have you taken? And how have the courses helped you?

The only general education classes I have taken so far are speech and music classes. My speech class [*Speech 8: Group Discussion*] has helped me become more outgoing. I can now better say what I feel without being embarrassed. The class has enabled me to be more sure of myself in conversation and in making friends. Before I took that class, I was very self-conscious about my own opinions. I was frequently embarrassed by what others might think about them, whether they thought my opinions were good or not. My teacher in my music class [*Music 130T, guitar*] has also helped me play the guitar as a soloist in front of the class without becoming overly nervous.

Do you have a role model?

It would probably be Ermelinda Holguin, president of the Chicano Health Organization [*CHO*] on campus. She's a senior premedical student whom I met as a peer adviser for the Health Careers Opportunities Program [*HCOP*] over the three-week summer orientation on campus. She also kept in touch with me throughout my freshman year. Holguin has already been accepted to the University of California, Irvine's Medical School for the next academic year. Being a senior, she knows many teachers on campus and is able to tell us about various classes.

What are your plans for the future?

I would like to become a pediatrician. So now I'm taking undergraduate classes that are required for admission to medical school. Last weekend I visited UCLA's medical school, and I plan to visit a few

others. At the medical schools, the advisers tell us about classes we should take, when to take them, and how to prepare for the required MCAT [*Medical College Aptitude Test*]. These premedical sessions have been helpful because many students who attend these classes are also interested in the same major and career. The advisers tell us about scholarships that are available and other useful information to help us during our college years.

What is it like being a female minority student at CSU, Fresno?

I feel that being a female student has opened many educational opportunities for me. There's a lot more university help for minorities than what there used to be. With the university's advising, tutoring, and financial aid help, more underrepresented minority women are now striving to be in the health professions.