

Josie Sanchez

Freshman

Josie Sanchez, a freshman premedical student, is the first member of her family of seven to attend a major university. "I am expected to be a role model for my three younger sisters," Sanchez says. "In my family, I've always earned the highest grades in school, so I'm expected to continue to do well."

Although many of Sanchez's friends and acquaintances consider her to be a shy, quiet person, Sanchez, speaking in her characteristically soft voice, says, "I have an inner drive to succeed in my education and in a professional career. I want to be more successful in school than my parents, who worked as migrant farm laborers when they were my age."

Sanchez, who graduated from Clovis High School in 1985 with a cumulative 3.5 grade-point average, became interested in education at an early age. In the third grade, for example, she was chosen for a gifted and talented student program in which she learned about such topics as mathematics, computers, and ecology. In high school Sanchez took advanced mathematics — her favorite class and strongest subject — and advanced English classes. She says, "I just sort of did things on my own in high school."

In her junior year Sanchez decided, despite not having been a college preparatory student, that she wanted to become a medical doctor. "Looking at TV news, documentaries, and newspapers about poverty-stricken areas like Ethiopia, I didn't see many doctors practicing medicine in those places," says Sanchez. "So, someday, I'd like to become a doctor and help the poor who need medical attention — especially the children."

Sanchez realized that as the first step toward becoming a doctor she needed a college education. With help from CSU, Fresno's outreach programs, and strong

encouragement and support from her parents, Sanchez enrolled at the university and is now completing her freshman year as a premedical-functional biology major.

Why did you decide to come to CSU, Fresno?

I came here because the university is near my home and my parents would rather I be close by in order to help care for my younger sisters [ages 2, 6, and 15]. Also, by living with my parents and commuting to campus, I save money. I also chose CSU, Fresno because the science classes have an excellent reputation for being well taught. Most important, the university offers all the required courses that I need for going on to a graduate or medical school.

How did you learn about CSU, Fresno?

While still in high school, I attended informational sessions in which CSU, Fresno's representatives talked about the university. I also attended a three-week summer program at CSU, Fresno sponsored by HCOP [Health Careers Opportunity Program] that helped me to learn more about the university. And so far

during my freshman year, I've had a lot of help from my advisers. They are helping me plan my studies for my four years here.

Have you found making new friends and adjusting to campus life difficult or easy?

I enjoy attending CSU, Fresno. The campus is relatively small, so there's good rapport among the people here. For example, if you really need to talk to your professor, you can just approach that person and talk. There's no big deal about it! In particular, I have found most students to be friendly and extremely helpful to incoming students. You feel like a part of the university, not like an outsider. Also, there are many students working part time [work study, student assistants, etc.] on campus. My friends say working on campus, as opposed to off campus, has helped them to adjust to university life much better.

How does studying at the university differ from high school?

Homework is considerably more. On the other hand, because I have only four courses this semester, I have more free

