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Personal Statement

As a child growing up, I was always monolingual. My mom is African-American and didn't grow up speaking Spanish. My dad is Mexican-American but he never taught me to be fluent in Spanish. Though there were some words and phrases he would go over with my siblings and I, the Spanish just never clicked. Automatically my family and I already had some Hispanic/Latino influence due to my dad's side of the family and just growing up in Southern California. This put me on the path to learning my history. While I lived in Menifee, CA from age 14 to 19, I took my first Spanish Class in High School. My very first Spanish Teacher was Mrs. Pendleton. When she introduced herself to the class, the one thing that caught my attention from her was the history of Mexico and the rest of Latin America. She emphasized on indigenous history which really put me on the trail to learning history in Latin America, the connection between Native Americans north and south of the Western Hemisphere, and learning Spanish. While I was in this class, I made a Cuban friend I known for several years, made some Filipino friends, and started listening to reggaeton. Though Filipinos are not considered Hispanic, I've come to learn that Filipinos are indigenous Pacific Islanders who were very much influenced by the Spaniards. These topics caught my attention because they reminded me of the struggles of African-Americans during the time of colonization and being stripped of their ancestral languages to speak a European language. Ironically, anyone might wonder why I would want to learn Spanish which is European in origin and a colonial language. Well I want to learn Spanish because it's beautiful, very diverse with words based on other

languages, there are many dialects, Spanglish has emerged in places like the United States, and it's now the native tongue for my ethnic background.

Spanish wasn't my only goal, as a teenager from middle school to high school, I learned more and more about college. I'm not a first-generation college student, but I've always known how important it was to achieve a degree. However, I struggled academically as a teenager to a young adult, as well as finding ways to financially support myself to reach my completion in a university. By age 21 I reached a dead end because my academic performance was low, and I needed financial aid or a job to help with my education goals. So, I decided to join the military in the United States Air Force in December 2011. At first, I thought this would delay my objective of focusing on school, then I took a deep breath and told myself that this would benefit me on the long run. With all the discipline learned, benefits earned, and money saved; the military helped me take advantage of the opportunities that were soon coming back on my path to success. Also, during my 6 years active duty in the Military, I went back to school on my second year of being in the Air Force. Though with some courses taken in the past and courses still in progress at the time, I had no idea what I wanted to major in. I thought about being a dentist, because biology was interesting and cleaning teeth became important to me after I learned about gingivitis. However, it wasn't in my heart to be a dentist. At one point in the summer of 2014, I took a Spanish Class at Hancock College and even with all the years of learning Spanish on-and-off, something told me I should major in Spanish as I took one Spanish class after another. Despite still not being fluent in Spanish and having a hard time listening, I find my best strengths in reading and writing; because of that I know I can do something useful with the skills I have.

Although I may lack some skills and knowledge in Spanish, I strive to work on my weaknesses. The challenge is instant communication while I talk and listen to other Spanish speakers. Though this is not easy, I know I can do it. I know I can do it because my options for a career are open to not just translating written material, but also interpreting, doing English Language Development (ELD), being a teacher, or just using it as useful tool. In the end I will get my Bachelors in Spanish and go even further with a Masters. With this I know I will speak it and make a career out of this.