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Personal Statement
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When I first came to California State University Monterey Bay (hereinafter referred to as CSUMB), I had no idea that Japanese Language and Culture would eventually become my major. I came to the school as a Human Communication major, but soon realized that writing wasn't for me. At the time, I was taking Japanese 101 to complete one of my language general education requirements, along with Cool Japan Today (a Japanese culture class). I realized soon after, that even though I knew of some Japanese culture (specifically manga and anime), that there was much more to learn. These classes were the reason that I eventually switched my major to Japanese.

The Japanese program here at CSUMB focuses primarily on language and cultural aspects; with a research and study abroad requirement as well. The culture classes that I've taken at CSUMB have focused on a multitude of different areas, whether that be anime, manga, history, contemporary Japan, or popular culture. I had never learned Japanese before coming to CSUMB, but I understood from the beginning why so many people call it one of the hardest languages to learn as a native English speaker. My language classes here have taken me from the beginning levels of Japanese to the intermediate level. By the time I graduate, I should achieve an intermediate-high level of fluency. While I do feel like I'm slowly improving over time, my time spent abroad was where I truly felt like I could apply my learning.

During the 2015-2016 school year, I studied abroad at Toyo University in Tokyo for the period of 1 year. The curriculum at Toyo University challenged me to not only adapt to

situations on the spot, but it also allowed me to develop my Japanese through practical applications of the language. Studying abroad also allowed me to travel around the country. While I did spend a large chunk of my time in Tokyo and the surrounding area; I also had opportunities to go to Hokkaido, Okinawa, and the Kansai region. I also had an opportunity to work in Toyo's English Community Zone, which allowed me to help Japanese students refine their English conversation and writing skills. My work at the English Community Zone made me later realize that I wanted to work in the language acquisition field.

My immediate career goal after college is to participate in the Japanese Exchange and Teaching Program (hereinafter referred to as JET). JET would not only allow me to go back to Japan for a few years and improve my Japanese, but it would also allow me to gain practical experience teaching in a classroom setting. After I finish the program, I would like to come back to CSUMB and get a masters/teaching credential in education. Afterwards, I plan to teach at secondary schools and eventually get a PhD. Although I never imagined that I would be a Japanese major when I first came to CSUMB, I have developed a love for the culture and language, and it has become an integral part of my future.