International Study Scholarship
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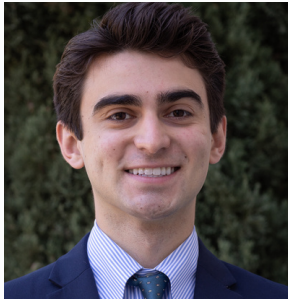
FRANCISCO GARCIA

Major: Computer Engineering
Cohort Year: 2021
Plans to study abroad in Carlos III University of Madrid, Spain
Spring 2025

As I begin to write this, all I can recall is when I was twelve years old; observing the happiness of my oldest sister as she was recalling her time while studying abroad in Spain, "Everything is so beautiful!" She continued further in Spanish, "La Semana Santa está hermoso en España, (Holy Week is beautiful in Spain)." Seeing her eyes glow with excitement even got me excited.

Since then, traveling to Spain has always been a dream of mine. Being a devoted Catholic, I too want to experience Holy Week in Spain as well as the many other religious ceremonies. In addition to this, hearing my older sister tell countless stories of the cultural similarities and unique differences between our Mexican heritage back in Jalisco and the Spanish roots have persuaded my ambition even further.

In addition to wanting to travel to Spain for its cultural and religious beauty, I also would love to continue my Computer Science and Engineering studies in a more appropriate setting that align with my own diverse background, culture, and mission to provide new technologies to Hispanic groups.

During my first year as a Computer Engineering major in UC San Diego, I had trouble with understanding many topics, such as object-oriented programming and data structures. Realizing I was one of very few Hispanics in this field of study made it especially difficult to maintain focus. As I was intimidated by the demographics of the CSE department, I failed to seek support due to the simple fact that the majority did not look like me or speak my native language. With these challenges, I feel as if I am not understood by the CSE faculty as they lack the cultural exposure to the Hispanic community.

To overcome this, I would like to study abroad in Spain with other Hispanic students who share similar interests in hopes of learning new perspectives on how Computer Science is taught in international universities abroad. My goal is to return to UC San Diego and apply the new skills that I will learn while in Spain, in hopes of creating a more inclusive community for CSE students of diverse backgrounds; with an emphasis in inspiring Hispanic students to pursue Computer Science and Engineering– a heavily marginalized field of study. In addition to this, I will continue my education within computer networks, software engineering, database management, and even machine learning– the breadth of courses taught in Spanish by top faculty in Carlos III University of Madrid, which will contribute greatly to my B.S. in Computer Engineering.

I have never been given the opportunity to travel to any other place as I lack the financial support and resources. However, with this generous International Study Abroad scholarship, and your support, I will be one step closer to accomplishing my dream of studying abroad in Spain with other Hispanic students who share my similar backgrounds and interests within Computer Science and Engineering.