

While most children have access to quality education within the vicinity of their homes, I walked a mile every morning to the school bus for safe transportation to my high school in west Fresno. Edison High is an academically and athletically advanced school despite being located in an underprivileged neighborhood. As a result of its location, the school receives less funding and recognition than its counterparts. Thus, when approximately 75 students uncomfortably boarded the bus every day, public officials did nothing to ensure the safe transport of its passengers. Due to the lack of available seats, students often sat three to a seat, on the floor next to the emergency exit, or in the laps of their friends. Feeling frustrated and degraded, I contemplated requesting additional buses from the school district. My mother, although supportive of my aspirations, forewarned me of the hardships I may face. Afraid of failure, I allowed her forewarnings to deter me from advocating for myself and fellow students. Today, this is one of my biggest regrets.

Advocacy is my primary inspiration to pursue law school. Although I missed the opportunity to contest bus overcrowding, the leadership positions I held throughout high school allowed me to advocate for marginalized populations. As captain of the cheer team, I facilitated conversations with the vice principal to replace the coach. The team felt uncomfortable with the coach's position and skill set as he was unknowledgeable about the sport and exemplified inappropriate conduct. As a result of our conversations, he was demoted and replaced with a coach who valued the team's feelings, boundaries, and opinions. This experience and many others highlighted my calling and passion for advocacy.

At the University of California – Davis, I had the opportunity to enhance my advocacy skills through additional leadership roles. For instance, I became a proud member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated – a public service organization dedicated to serving marginalized and underrepresented communities with an emphasis on dismantling racial and gender hierarchies. As the 2020 Lambda Xi Chapter President, I facilitated workshops and programs to foster and advocate for cultural inclusivity, including the annual Multi-Cultural Extravaganza. This program highlights and celebrates the diversity at UC Davis while prompting the audience to mobilize and become allies for the celebrated communities. Specifically, audience members were encouraged to research, donate, and serve organizations like Black Lives Matter, the NAACP, the ACLU, and Stop AAPI Hate. Furthermore, as a UC Davis Cheer Team Leader, I lobbied the UC Davis Administration to treat the cheer team equally to other sports and clubs on campus. Specifically, I urged school administrators to grant the team members with priority registration and travel reimbursements. Through several discussions, I successfully procured travel reimbursements for non-local events. Although I have graduated, I continue to promote priority registration within the UC Davis administration in my current role as a volunteer assistant coach.

Since graduating college, I continue to service and advocate for underrepresented and marginalized communities. After transferring to the Sacramento Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority Inc., I joined the Fundraising and Community Service committees. In the Fundraising committee, I occupy a seat on the planning team of the Sacramento Alumnae Chapter Annual Crab Feed: an event that fundraises money to

support the various programs of the chapter, including scholarship awards for incoming and current college students. In the Community Service committee, I organized the Red and White Christmas; this event provided Christmas dinner, gifts and entertainment to underprivileged families in the greater Sacramento area. Further, as a Legislative Intern for Senator Beall, I was fortunate enough to advocate for marginalized populations through the California State Legislature. I helped develop legislation and processed budget requests pertaining to mental health rights, further illuminating the need to improve the state's mental healthcare system. Utilizing my experience in the Senate, I became a Budget Analyst at the California Department of State Hospitals. I now have the privilege to advocate for our most vulnerable population by writing budget proposals for competency restoration services, housing, and employment services on behalf of people with mental illnesses.

Although my current profession is noteworthy, I truly believe that I can make a greater impact on my community as a lawyer. I aspire to advocate for the underserved and forgotten by utilizing the law to uplift people during their most vulnerable moments. The gap between legal needs and available services further exacerbates systemic inequities and disadvantages. I believe by providing underrepresented populations with adequate legal representation, I can help combat racial hierarchies and create opportunities for upward mobility. Further, my long-term goal is to return to Fresno and open a non-profit organization that hosts legal scholarships and fellowships for high school students in disadvantaged neighborhoods. For these reasons and many more, I am pursuing a Juris Doctorate degree.