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Fearless Friday: Vanessa Martinez

Vanessa Martinez
Gettysburg College

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Fearless Friday: Vanessa Martinez

Abstract

In this week's edition of Fearless Friday, Surge is pleased to honor the work of Vanessa Martinez '19.

Vanessa is an Anthropology major with a Peace and Justice Studies minor from Los Angeles, California. Though she is only a sophomore, Vanessa is already heavily involved in Gettysburg's campus. She is the secretary of the Latin American Student Association, handles public relations for the Asian Student Alliance, and is a member of the Black Student Union. Vanessa works for the Center for Public Service as a program coordinator for the bilingual after-school program at VIDA Charter School. During Spring Break 2017, she will be a project leader for an Immersion Trip to Baltimore, Maryland, which will focus on models of urban education reform. Additionally, Vanessa works for the Department of Public Safety as an administrative assistant and also serves as a Diversity Peer Educator on campus.

[*excerpt*]

Keywords

Surge, Surge Gettysburg, Gettysburg College, Center for Public Service, Asian Student Alliance, Baltimore, Black Student Union, Diversity Peer Educators, Education, Latin American Student Association, Los Angeles, One Voice, PWI, Social Justice

Disciplines

Civic and Community Engagement | Race, Ethnicity and Post-Colonial Studies

Comments

Surge is a student blog at [Gettysburg College](https://www.gettysburg.edu) where systemic issues of justice matter. Posts are originally published at surgegettysburg.wordpress.com Through stories and reflection, these blog entries relate personal experiences to larger issues of equity, demonstrating that -isms are structural problems, not actions defined by individual prejudice. We intend to popularize justice, helping each other to recognize our biases and unlearn the untruths.

SURGE

[VERB] : to move suddenly or powerfully forward or upward

FEARLESS FRIDAY: VANESSA MARTINEZ

October 14, 2016



In this week's edition of Fearless Friday, Surge is pleased to honor the work of Vanessa Martinez '19.

Vanessa is an Anthropology major with a Peace and Justice Studies minor from Los Angeles, California. Though she is only a sophomore, Vanessa is already heavily involved in Gettysburg's campus. She is the secretary of the Latin American Student Association, handles public relations for the Asian Student Alliance, and is a member of the Black Student Union. Vanessa works for the Center for Public Service as a program coordinator for the bilingual after-school program at VIDA Charter School. During Spring Break 2017, she will be a project leader for an Immersion Trip to Baltimore, Maryland, which will focus on models of urban education reform. Additionally, Vanessa works for the Department of Public Safety as an administrative assistant and also serves as a Diversity Peer Educator on campus.

Vanessa is proud of herself just for applying to many of these positions, let alone getting accepted into them. She knows that the skills she is learning while working and volunteering on campus will be ones that she can carry around with her in the future:

"When I came to Gettysburg I was just beginning to learn about social justice issues affecting students of color on campus, and by becoming involved with the Center for Public Service I have been able to expand my knowledge on not only issues in Gettysburg, but in the [surrounding] town, different cities and even different countries. Additionally, through my work with different clubs and as a peer educator, I have also begun applying my knowledge to spark conversations, collaborations and projects."

Vanessa was inspired to work in social justice because of the support she has received from her One Voice family, a program based in L.A. that works to connect students to colleges:

“They have pushed me to be the change I want to see. They are the reason I am so passionate about education. That is why I want to pass on the support and guidance they have given me later on in life maybe as a college counselor for disadvantaged youth or working at a non-profit after college.”

Vanessa also cited her move from a predominantly Latinx and African American city to a predominantly white institution, Gettysburg College, as a source of motivation in her work for social justice. This change in environment made her more aware of the different issues affecting her and her home city. She hopes to encourage dialogue and enact change whenever and wherever she can so that others can be enlightened, as she was, to the issues facing society.

Speaking about the importance of social justice, Vanessa noted: “Something that I find amazing about social justice issues is that I am always going to continue to learn. The more we learn, the more we have to share. Sometimes we are given the role of educator, but I think it is also equally important to learn alongside one another because that is where the discussions and passion is located. On the ground floor we can make the connections and possibly even see a solution.”

Thank you, Vanessa, for your commitment to bettering our community!

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