Dianelys Garcia

Outstanding Student Award Personal Statement

Who do you picture when you hear the word *leader*? I would imagine a Monmouth University student, more specifically, myself. When arriving at Monmouth, the thought of being a leader and having a lasting effect on this campus was something I could see in others, not myself. However, with my continued immersion in campus life, I became that person.

The first step in becoming an active member of the Monmouth community was joining an organization: Alpha Omicron Pi. Becoming part of a greater community outside of the four walls of Beechwood hall started the fire of passion and leadership in my heart. I became the director of philanthropy in this organization, which allowed me to connect with members on campus, charity organizations, and campus clubs to raise awareness for many philanthropies. Not only was I able to leave my mark on philanthropies across the state, but I was able to educate the broader campus community on issues that may affect the lives of students such as Arthritis, Pediatric Cancer, and Mental Health. This ignited my desire to help those struggling through adversities.

Following this, I became interested in guiding students directly living in on/off-campus apartments. This is when I decided to apply to become a Community Assistant. Students typically living in university housing may feel homesick, lonely, or not themselves. I saw some of these emotions firsthand with my roommates As a CA, I was able to conduct programs to give students new ways to cope with their mental health, provide professional opportunities for them, as well as giving them ways to interact and socialize with other residents. This was an excellent way to give residents an outlet from the stresses of school, while also providing beneficial activities for them to take part in.

One of the most vital of my accomplishments at Monmouth University has been the establishment of a club: STEM Up Students of Color! The founding of this organization was one that I felt was imperative to the progression of Monmouth University’s diversifying student body. As a first-generation, Hispanic young woman, I thought it was my duty to establish a community for students of color at a school where our population is so minimal. This organization uplifts, supports, and amplifies these students’ voices. I wanted to provide a safe space for students of color in these fields as we have been disproportionately affected by hardships experienced whilst studying science, technology, mathematics, or engineering. This is something that will leave a lasting effect on the campus not only because of the safe space it provides to students of color going into STEM fields but also because it welcomes students of all backgrounds and shows them that they have a home here.

Being a leader is not something that should be taken lightly. A leader undertakes the responsibility of being a role model while advocating for others. I can confidently express that Monmouth provided me with the tools necessary to excel to serve the community and lead efficiently.