

# HD Peer Newsletter

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## HD Alumni Veronica Gutierrez



Not only did Veronica graduate from CSUSM in 2007 with an HD degree, she is now our HD Academic Advisor and I recently had the pleasure of interviewing her on her journey from graduation to now!

After graduation it was hard for her to find a job due to the economy so she started working as a receptionist at a casino. At this point in time she also started working part-time in a group home where she helped boys ages 13-18 transition between their home, foster care, juvenile hall, and the group home. While working at the group home, Veronica met a probation officer who peaked her interest, and decided to take the necessary tests to become a probation officer. After receiving a letter stating that there was a hiring freeze due to budget cuts, Veronica decided to apply to North County Lifeline where she became a case manager. After working with families that were at risk for four years, she began working as a Special Ed Coordinator at Valley Center High School helping graduating student's transition into independent living skills. Veronica is working as our academic advisor, which is her current path in her professional journey.

I hope Veronica's journey and words inspire you to continue your path in the human services field as well as to help you keep in mind that finding your dream job takes time, so be patient and remember Veronica's advice to "keep exploring!"

\*Interview questions and answers on page 2

## What is P.A.S.S.?

P.A.S.S. stands for Personalized Academic Success Services and offers *free* services to students, such as the following:

- Academic and Personal Development Workshops
- Academic Goal Development
- Support for Students on Probation
- Student Support Counseling
- Resource Referral Services

Contact Arlene Toya for more information at [atoya@csusm.edu](mailto:atoya@csusm.edu) or call the office at (760) 750-6056.

Office located in Kellogg 1105

## Upcoming Workshops

### **Backstage Pass to the Successful Student's Mind:**

Learn tips on successful studying!

March 4<sup>th</sup> during U-hour

### **Test-Taking Strategies**

March 11<sup>th</sup> during U-hour

To find the location and to sign up for workshops go to [www.csusm.edu/class/pass](http://www.csusm.edu/class/pass)



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## Q & A

### **Why did you choose Human Development?**

I could not make up my mind between psychology and sociology, and HD has both. It made it more fun for me to take a little bit of everything. I loved HD. My professors were awesome! Dr. Bigham and Dr. Soriano helped me a lot.

### **Why did you choose your current career?**

Once I started working in the group home and got a taste of probation and at risk youth I really liked it, which is why I wanted to pursue probation, but probation wasn't an option at that point and my plan B was someday seeing myself as a counselor or an advisor with students. I always saw myself working with high school kids, but then I got a taste of higher education and I really liked it. I like higher education, because I am working with students that want to be here and that want to go out into the community and make a difference.

### **What qualifications are important to be successful in this profession?**

*Personal:* You have to want to be here, like your job, and like the people you work with. What I mean is every student is different so everyday is a different day. You get one student that is super happy and doesn't have problems, and then you get another student going through different stuff in their life and you do your best to help them.

*Professional:* You need a bachelor's degree, but a master's degree is a plus. I did not have any experience other than school, but I am learning as I go and rely on my peers to help me.

### **What do you enjoy most about your current position?**

I totally love my job! I have yet to say, " Oh my god I have to go to work," I seriously love my job! I don't see it as a job. I come in socialize with my students, try and help them and guide them with their classes, encourage them to advocate for themselves as far as asking questions and exploring resources to help them be a college graduate. I really enjoy working with students, because it is very rewarding to know students appreciate what you do and to work with students who are willing to meet you halfway. I try my hardest to fit every student in; my door is always open!

### **What advice do you have for graduating seniors?**

To explore the career center, to visit certain agencies that they might be interested in and start asking questions like what certain qualifications do I need to work here, and what can I do to get my foot in the door; start volunteering, and network with people. It's okay if you do not get a job right away, and if you do get a job that's not in your field just keep exploring your options and keep them open! Always keep looking for an opportunity and if one comes up, jump on it!

For all of the HD students interested in school counseling/academic advising, I encourage you to speak with Veronica and any of the other advisors. Ask them questions about their journey and any advice they have, because their words are very helpful and motivating! Veronica thank you so much for your advice and words of encouragement!

