

PASO SCHOLAR HIGHLIGHT

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· **What are some of your future goals?**

I am third year Biochemistry major at California State University San Marcos. I am a first generation student. My goal is to attend graduate school and obtain my PhD.

· **What has most benefited you as a PASO Scholar?**

The PASO program provided me with the opportunity to take courses design specifically for PASO students. Through these classes I was able to meet and interact with many other first generation students who I could relate with because they came from a similar background as me. These courses were invaluable, as they gave first generation students like me an environment where we could transition and become accustomed to the challenges and rigors of college. I am thankful for the PASO program as it was of great help during my first two semesters at CSUSM and continues to provide me with a community of people I can turn to when the need arises.

· **Are you involved in any other programs on campus?**

Recently I was also given the opportunity to join the TRIO McNair Scholars program at CSUSM. The McNair Program introduced me to the prospect of attending graduate school which was an option that I had only briefly considered. Through the McNair program I have learned about what is needed in order to have a competitive grad school application and the skills required to succeed once in grad school. Thanks to the McNair program I have developed greatly as a student and have come to realize that higher education is an attainable goal for first generation students. One of the things that make this such as great program is the incredible effort and support given to us by the McNair staff. The McNair mentors have been working closely with us throughout the entire process of our grad school or summer research applications. Thanks to the help of the McNair program, I will have the opportunity to participate in research as part of the REU University of Oxford, Miami this summer. I highly encourage anyone who is interested in pursuing graduate school to take into consideration the Trio McNair Scholars program.