

# **Aliyah Romero**

## **June 2020 Graduation**

### **Double major French and International Relations**

**French was my favorite subject throughout high school, so I knew I wanted to continue studying it in college. I took the French placement test at the beginning of my first-year of college and was able to skip the introductory series. Once I started taking classes, I just couldn't stop. The French courses I took at UC Davis were some of the best, most memorable courses I took during undergrad. In addition, given my interest in working in global health, I knew that strengthening my French skills via the French Major would be an asset given the high-demand for French speakers in the sector. Don't compare your college experience to others. Yes, make the most out of your experience while you're at UC Davis because it truly does go by so quickly, but don't feel discouraged if it doesn't end up feeling like "the best time of your life." College has its ups and downs, so it's important to have a support system, whatever that may look like for you (friends, professors, student organizations, etc.). Get involved if you can, but don't feel like you need to over extend yourself either. Use this time to explore your interests, but also know that it's okay if you realize halfway through your first semester that you're in the wrong major. It happened to me and I ended up finding majors that were more aligned with my interests: International Relations and French. I studied abroad at the University of Bordeaux for one semester as a Gilman scholar. It was a great experience given that I wanted to go abroad to strengthen my French skills and finally put them to the test. Being fully immersed in the language can be daunting at first, but over time your skills will strengthen dramatically. I also took a course in French with French students, which was a challenging, yet rewarding experience as it further cemented my French skills. I also made lifelong friends (both UCEAP and international) while living in Bordeaux and made tons of incredible memories. After college, I worked as an English Language Assistant through TAPIF where I lived in a small town outside of Lille helping middle school English teachers with their language instruction. Even though I was teaching English, I was utilizing French in all other contexts, including when I would help the teachers I worked with with the creation of lesson plans. Moreover, I currently intern for the Yale Global Health Leadership Initiative (GHLI) where I work on multiple Francophone programs related to health systems strengthening. My internship requires a significant amount of French-English and English-French translation, which I would not have had the skills to perform had I not taken French at UC Davis, studied abroad in France, and later lived in France again to work as an English Language Assistant. I will also add that the courses I took with Professor Warner exploring France's colonial history and the lasting impact that it has had on their former colonies has also been useful as a MPH candidate at Yale concentrating in Global Health and throughout my internship at GHLI.**