

MARCH 2023



SOFIA SMITH

Hi! My name is Sofia Smith, and I am a 4th year Public Health Sciences major. I enjoy going to concerts, watching TV, and playing with my cat Juniper.

**Involvements at UCI:**

- Softball Club at UCI (2019-2023) - President 2021-2023, Fundraising Chair 2020-2021
- UCI Housing - Student Housing Advisor (2020-2021)
- Student Alumni Association - Director of Spirits and Traditions & VP of Membership (2022-2023)
- Student Parent Orientation Program (SPOP) - Staffer (2022), Returner (2023)
- College Corps Fellow (2022-2023)

## **What has been the most fulfilling experience you have had in a leadership role?**


Being President of Club Softball has been the most fulfilling leadership role during my time at UCI. It's hard to pick a specific moment as my team and I have made so many amazing memories together. The past two years serving as President has taught me so much, from helping to coach the team to endless emails, it has all been very fulfilling. There is something so special about being on a team. Win or lose, our bond is unbreakable, and I'm so honored to have contributed to the culture. Even though I am sad to leave them once I graduate, I'm so excited to see what the future holds for the team.

## **What accomplishment are you most proud of?**

I'm most proud of my involvement with the Hispanic Scholarship Fund. I have been fortunate enough to have received several scholarships from HSF. Earlier this year, I was able to meet 99 other HSF scholars from all over the country who have similar interests and passions in healthcare. Although the summit was only 4 days, I was able to make meaningful connections with the lovely people I met. I am forever grateful to HSF because the experience and the culture not only validated my aspirations to pursue physical therapy, but they believe in my and my dreams.

## **Who is your role model at UCI? How have they impacted you?**

My role model at UCI is Lesley Aguirre. I met Lesley last summer during my time as a SPOP staffer, she currently serves as the Transition Programs Coordinator for the Center for Student Leadership at UCI. From the first time I met Lesley, I felt nothing but love and support from her. When it came time to apply for the SPOP returner position, I couldn't resist the opportunity to work with Lesley again. It's so inspirational seeing Latinx representation in higher education. In a place as big as UCI, it's easy to feel lost in it all, but Lesley would never let that happen. Lesley has the ability to bring out the best in everyone. She has been there for me during hard times and taught me that it's okay to feel all of my emotions. I'm so proud to work under such an amazing and inspirational person.



**Everyone experiences some form of failure in their life, how have you dealt with it?**

The best way I have found to deal with failure is to first allow myself to feel it. I think it's important for me to not push aside or ignore any emotions that come with failure. After giving myself time to process (and cope when necessary), I learn from my failures. I do this by examining where I went wrong and determining where I can improve for the future. The most important step of dealing with failure is moving on. Although it's not easy, putting failures behind you and moving on with your life can sometimes be what's best. I do this by applying for exciting new opportunities or hanging out with friends. Although it's cliché, just remember that failure does not define you.

**What advice would you give to your first-year self?**

This is a hard question for me just because my first-year was cut short due to COVID. If I had to say one thing to myself, it would be that your time will come. It was hard to sit at home thinking about all the things I could be doing if I was on campus with my friends, but it helped me to make the most out of the time I had left at UCI. There are so many opportunities at UCI, and it can be hard to prioritize and choose which ones to be a part of. Just know that whatever you're doing, it's enough. Don't be afraid to take risks and try new things. You know yourself best, so make sure that you still remember to take time off to rest amidst all your involvements.

