



My name is  
**Melanea Ontiveros**

and I am a fourth-year student majoring in sociology and minoring in Spanish. I was born in Arteaga, Michoacan, and I came to the United States at the age of five. I have resided in Santa Rosa, California ever since. I have two sisters and one brother, and I am the oldest.

I am very involved on campus as a student intern for the DREAM Center. I advocate for undocumented students and share scholarships, resources, and other connections available. I am also a tutor and mentor for the California Mini-Corps program, providing academic and emotional support to children of migrant families at Sheppard Elementary School. Currently, I also volunteer at the Roseland Village Teen Club, working with 7th-12th graders from the Roseland Community. I will be graduating in the Spring of 2020 and enrolling in the Multiple Subject Teaching Credential Program to become an elementary school teacher. I have a passion for working with students and encouraging them to realize their own potential. I promote higher education and continuously remind them of their ability to succeed in the face of adversity.

As an undocumented, first generation, low-income Latina, I have faced many challenges that impacted my journey at SSU. During my senior year of high school, I was unaware of the college process. There were many times when I felt lost and confused, such as when filling out college applications, applying for financial aid, and registering for classes. Since I cannot legally receive any federally funded student assistance such as loans, grants, or work-study, scholarships are what ultimately allowed me to continue my education. The current policies and laws add considerable constraints on undocumented students and our families. As a Latina, I also encounter linguistic and cultural barriers when interacting with my peers. I often experience a sense of insecurity as I approach others, but when I enter a classroom and see another brown face, my anxiety lessens. My significant personal achievements and exemplary involvement on and off campus, display my social responsibility and my passion for helping others. By taking part in community-oriented opportunities, I display my initiative and dedication to make an impact in our present and our future.

My experience at Sonoma State University has been an amazing four years of growing and finding my purpose. Many of these life-changing experiences were influenced by my involvement campus and by other students and faculty that motivated supported me. I am extremely appreciative of the opportunities, support provided by the Sociology and Spanish departments. What I wish to see is more diversity within the faculty in the classrooms because I believe that would encourage more diverse student groups.



**My involvement on and off campus, display my social responsibility and my dedication to make an impact in our present and our future.**

