



**Aline Gregorio**  
Undergraduate, Geography Department

*Aline Gregorio came to the United States from Brazil when she was 16 years old. Her first years of education were focused on catching up to the language. After many years of struggling with general requirements of High School, and later college, she felt inspired in her first geography course. From that point on, she decided to pursue her education in the discipline and to become a college professor. After college, she will continue her post-baccalaureate education at Cal State Fullerton in Geography. She plans to turn her focus to tropical rainforests and the geopolitical issues involving tropical rainforests conservation in Latin America. As a graduate student, she plans to contribute to the academic world with new research and findings, but mostly, she plans to inspire other students to learn as much as she has and take this learning to a personal level of experience.*

As I stand up here, I cannot help but to recall these long years of college and its many challenges. I don't know about everyone here, but it has been waaaaaaay longer than four years! Looking back in time I recall a similar time from today, the last time I wore a cap and gown: at high school graduation when I thought I was ready to face the world... It was a time of confusion, of no certainties... Little did I know... Where was I to go from there? I envisioned no path, but I had no other thought but to keep on going, even if in circles, I said to myself "keep on going." And perhaps not in circles, but surely not in a direct path with a promising future, I kept on going...

In college, I changed my major multiple times: from Economics, to English, to Mathematics, to Advertising and Marketing, then finally I was sure... Interior Design! My schedule was set, and as an interior design major I still had to get those boring general requirements out of the way... And that was when I sat in my first geography class with Mrs. Grabiell. With her bright eyes and gestures I remember Mrs. Grabiell throwing terms around: Globalization, Cultural Identity, Social Inequality, World Poverty, Language, Religion, Global Warming, Environmental Degradation, Sustainability, and, our class's personal favorite, Coriolis Effect! All those terms were tossed at me with so much intention for the first time! I was stunned! I sat there listening to reality... Really listening to different realities... A reality that is whole,

interdependent, and undeniable. I was learning about the world: the very same dynamic world that is in constant change, and in constant need for change. **Revolution stirred within**. I felt needed as an essential member of a whole complex. That is when I asked myself the important question that has led me to be here today: I asked myself not what I wanted to **do** with my education, but who I wanted to **be**. The **real** question was: who did I want to **be** in this world. Was I to learn a trait, or was I to use this to **become** many things? And the answer is not only in what I learned, but in becoming what I learned. In geography, I became. I became an environmentalist, a humanitarian, an idealist, an activist, a skeptic, an outdoors enthusiast, adventurous, curious, expressive, rebellious, intelligent, a multicultural person, an international citizen among many other things... I am a geographer. I have become ready for the dynamics of this world: to **adapt to change** and to **provoke change**. As I keep on the journey of becoming, revolution **continues to stir within and eventually throughout**. As a geographer I hope to continue to grow, and perhaps provoke the same growth in others as the amazing professors that inspired each one of us have... And to all of you... Thank You... Thank you for helping me become.