

## Lynda Duran (Aguado)

**Class year:** 2008

**Major:** Psychology

**Current Profession:** Assistant Director of Student Life



I still have the yellow folder that I received in the mail that read, "Congratulations," on the front. I couldn't believe I was actually accepted into my dream school, and thanks to the El Pomar Scholarship, I could actually afford to go! I remember orientation, and the mixed feelings of excitement and embarrassment I had. While I couldn't wait to be a Tiger, I quickly learned that I was different in both ethnicity and social class. While other parents were staying at the Broadmoor, my mother was staying with me, in my tiny dorm room in Bemis. I showed up to my first day of class proudly carrying the laptop that I had saved for all summer. I did everything I could to make sure that the other students did not discover just how broke and unsure of myself I was.

I did a lot of hiding during my time at CC. I had a routine habit of class, lunch, nap, and work. If it wasn't for my work study job at the library, and the first-generation student meetings, I might never have left my dorm room! During breaks and weekends, I was constantly on the first bus back to Denver to be home.

It was not until I forced myself to apply to study abroad in Spain the summer before my senior year that I actually broke out of my introverted shell and took a risk. This is where I met Hannah, Maria, Lexi, Rachel, Brian, and Andrew. And who could forget Kathy Bizzaro and Pamela Tala Ruiz! My summer in Spain showed me the importance of connecting authentically with peers and faculty, and I am so very thankful for that.

Looking back at my time at CC, I feel grateful for the opportunities that my experience has granted me, as I was able to complete a master's program in counseling psychology (thanks to Darlene Garcia for her career guidance) and land a wonderful job working in higher education. I also feel a bit of regret for the times that I hid. Why didn't I ask for help when I didn't know how to work the microscope in neuro? Why didn't I admit that calculus was completely foreign to me?

If I could encourage today's CC students to do anything differently than I, I would encourage them to take just one step outside of their comfort zone, and to have the courage to ask for help and support when needed.

Students: Remember that alumni are also a resource for you! Alumni of color have recently formed the group, "Colorado College Alumni and Student of Color Association," (CCASCA), and we strive to support CC's communities of color both past and present!