

DIANA LONG

Kennedy HS Class of 2017
Trinity University Class of 2021
SAEP Scholarship Alumni

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SAEP Alumni
Profile



As early as middle school, Diana knew that college was something that she was interested in pursuing. But as a first generation student, and the daughter of immigrants, she wasn't entirely sure how to get there. "At 11 years old, the only school I knew about was UTSA. Once I got into high school, I started learning about GPA and class rank, but I didn't really have anyone in my family who had gone to college. So, I knew I needed guidance."

Taking advantage of services offered at Kennedy, she joined Upward Bound, applied for the San Antonio Education Partnership Scholarship, and worked with her counselors to navigate the college process. Accepted to 10 schools, she committed to Trinity University.

"At the time, I didn't know what going to Trinity really meant- I knew it meant college and that college is something I was supposed to do."

Determined to make the most of her experience at Trinity, Diana immersed herself in internships, experiential learning, and mentorship opportunities. She changed her major from Pre-Med to Sociology after speaking with faculty members. She worked as a tutor with Upward Bound, was meeting new friends from all over the nation, and enjoyed living on campus. But then, halfway through her junior year, the COVID-19 pandemic hit and changed life as she knew it.

"Everyone had to go back home. It was lonely, and difficult. It was important to keep checking on friends, difficult to keep up with classes, and even though I had everything that I needed to be successful- it was hard to find the motivation to keep going. When the world is falling apart, the last thing you want to do is write an essay."

But as she and her classmates adapted to their new normal, they created structure and encouraged each other. In Spring 2021, Trinity returned to in person classes and Diana reconnected with many of her classmates and friends. The world continues healing, and she is currently expected to attend all classes in person at UT Austin to complete their Education Policy and Planning program. "I realized I wanted to make a difference in something I cared about, and that was education."

"My dream is to get a PhD someday; I love being in schools and teaching others. I've worked with so many faculty members at Trinity, and I know that they have changed my life. I see what they've done for me, and I want to be that for someone."

When asked what advice she would offer to those starting on their own college journey, she said the following:

"Be patient, it's difficult. At the end of my first semester, I thought I was going to fail." She questioned whether she belonged at Trinity, and she even considered transferring. "I was told, 'You deserve to be there, where you are, just as much as anyone else.' And that's right. I see my classmates, and despite everything I am right there with them. So, I tell others, 'You're capable of doing anything. Stop comparing yourself to others, keep your end goal in mind, keep the people that believe in you in your mind. You can do this.'"

"If you would have told me back in high school, that I would be where I am now, I wouldn't have believed you. I wasn't aware of all the opportunities that were out there for me. I would tell that young version of me to keep going. There is so much to learn, there is so much to do to help people. Keep learning. It's hard but it's completely worth it. It's hard, but you'll see the fruits of your labor."



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