Where do I Fit?

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Ontario, California is the place that I call home, a place where the “exotic” language of Spanish is the common language where the elote man is around every corner. Ontario is a community where I found my people everywhere I turned. But this all changed. I moved seven hours north to Santa Cruz, California to follow a sueño.

I was no longer a part of the 909 but now the 831. Changing area codes was the easiest step for me in the journey to follow my dreams. I was now faced with being labeled a Student of Color.

A Student of What? ¿Qué?

I did not blend in with my new community--I was now different. I soon found out there are not that many Portuguese and Peruvian mixes out there. Being multi-racial puts me in a different category; Torn between two sides of my identity. Not feeling complete. Outsider.

I was the conqueror and the conquered all in one. I did not just know three languages; I also knew two cultures and traditions. I had to find a way to keep true to my identities but adapt to my new surroundings and find a space where I could be authentic!

A space where I could speak my mind, not be seen different, and be open to understand how society perceives me as a White woman or a Latina or an Other. I was able to find Latino and multicultural student groups, but I was still not able to fully connect with them. I was finally exposed to a multi-racial student group--I found my place.

Elizabeth M. Guevara, originally from Southern California, received a Bachelor of Arts degree in Sociology at the University of California, Santa Cruz. Elizabeth is currently a first-year graduate student in the HESA program and serves as the Assistant Residence Director for the Living Learning Center at UVM.
I was not expected to pick one side of me or the other,  
I was able to embrace my background and was finally seen as Me!

But the Guevara in me wants to fight and stand for what I believe in.  
So I am here at UVM starting a different chapter in my life,  
a chapter that continues my struggle of understanding myself and where I fit en este mundo.  
A world that makes me conscious of both my privileges and obstacles,  
a world that can hurt me with just one word,  
a world that does not see the true me!

The true me that is ready to change this world,  
to fight for people like me and believes that we deserve better.

I am here to challenge myself and my surroundings.  
To make people think.  
To prove to everyone who has doubted me,  
that this first generation, multi-racial, fair-skinned woman of color with a learning difference  
can succeed in this world  
and be a role model for others to follow.

¡Si puedo hacerlo entonces puedes hacerlo también!  
Se eu posso fazê-lo então você pode fazê-lo também!  
If I can do it then you can do it as well!