Why GPS: Finding the awe in other ways of life

As part of an ongoing series, we give students the creative liberty to opine on their favorite memories from the School and “why GPS” is a solid fit to pursue their graduate education

By Juan Pablo Feregrino, 2018 MIA candidate | GPS News

Whilst I found myself in the midst of what I called the “Japanese Jumanji,” I realized my true passion is to be challenged by new ideas and to experience new cultures and ways of life.

I developed a taste for this while working in San Francisco as a sales consultant for the Latin American region. On a daily basis I spoke with individuals from different countries and geographical settings.

My turning point was realizing I wanted more and could only get more by going somewhere completely foreign. Hence, my one-year expedition into the “Japanese Jumanji”—with its giant-sized bugs—as an English teacher.

One day in the country and I knew my new goal: Make this feeling of excitement and awe continue. Taste different airs, see different faces, hear different sounds and learn to adapt in places that are, perhaps, unimaginable.

Realizing this passion is what led me to the UC San Diego School of Global Policy
and Strategy (GPS). Currently in my third quarter at the School, I have my eyes set on becoming a foreign service officer.

The GPS community is extremely conducive to learning and has an ever-present diversity. Due in part to this, every day I come to campus I am rewarded with a glimpse of my future goal realized. This is exceptionally motivating and speaks to the experiences I have had thus far—and those to come.

GPS has many student organizations that routinely put on cultural events and provide an environment for sharing cross-cultural knowledge.

![Image of GPS community](image)

It has been my experience that GPS is a safe space and that students are welcome and, in fact, encouraged to share thoughts without judgement or repercussions.

A particular event that stands out for me is the Lunar New Year Festival. It was a large event that took the cooperation of many student organizations and included presentations of various Asian art forms.

Students dressed in traditional clothing, regional specific food was served, and a glimpse into the faraway lands was shared.

This quarter, a similar event focused on Latin America will happen, LASO Fest. I look forward to my remaining time at GPS and to maintaining the relationships I have developed.