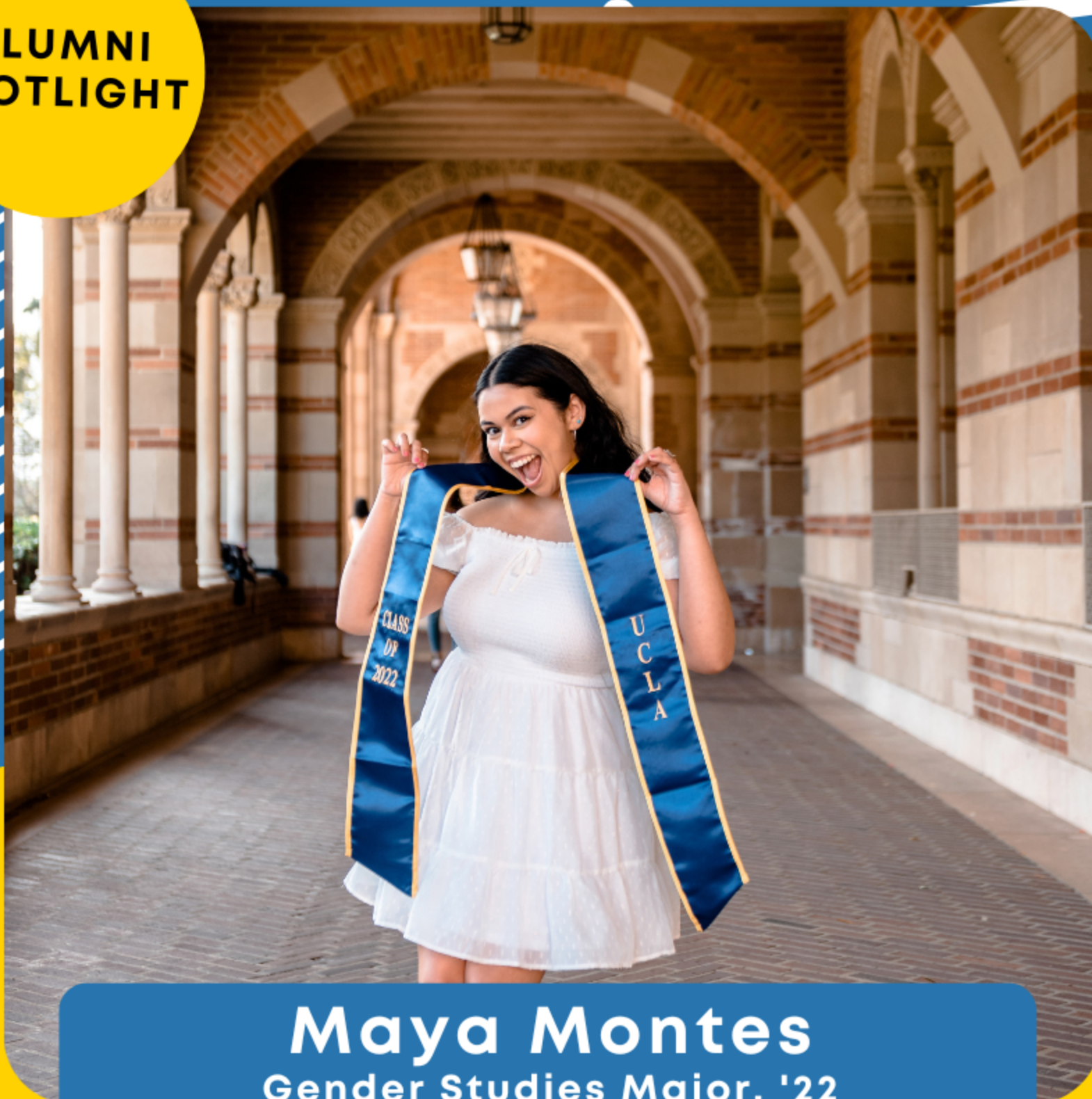


**ALUMNI
SPOTLIGHT**



Maya Montes
Gender Studies Major, '22

Administrative Assistant for the School
Relations and Diversity Outreach
Department at her local community college

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

UNDERGRADUATE LIFE

“IT IS ONE OF THE REASONS THAT I CHOSE UCLA OVER OTHER UNIVERSITIES THAT I WAS ACCEPTED TO, I KNEW THAT THROUGH AAP AND CCCP I WAS GOING TO BE TAKEN CARE OF AND THAT THERE WAS GOING TO BE A PLACE FOR ME AT UCLA”

Maya’s academic training within Gender Studies supported her in learning about different systems of oppression and using higher education as a pathway to empower people through knowledge.

“I remember one of my gender studies professors saying, your professors were activist long before they ever considered being a professor...that’s just something that I hold really close to me...”

Before joining UCLA, Maya was able to participate in CCCP where she had the chance to hear different student stories.

“I think something really special happens when people share their stories, that made me feel like once I got here I was going to belong and that there was going to be people and places that wanted to help me.”

Then, at UCLA, Maya decided to become a Peer advisor for CCCP.

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CURRENT PATH

During her spring break of her senior year at UCLA, Maya went back to her community college to do a presentation on the Center for Community College Partnerships, where she was able to network with former connections.

"I really wanted to be in a role to empower students, like I made it out on the other side of this, you're gonna make it out, I'm gonna say this, and this is how we're going to do it... for me education has been a really great pathway into empowering people. So that's why I felt like going into higher education and academic counseling has just been a really great fit for me."

"For my other role, being a campus representative for the academic and career pathways, that is more directly calling students that are within our disproportionately impacted communities, making sure that they have their academic counseling appointments or just seeing just how they're doing, how they're holding up this semester, and then also trying to cultivate different events on campus that are relevant to their area of study... you know, make sure that students feel like they belong on campus."

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FUTURE PLANS & ADVICE

After a few more years of working in the field of Education, Maya shared that she plans to utilize her experience in graduate school:

"I am eager to get back into a space where I am actively creating knowledge from this kind of hands on experience, working with students who have disproportionately been impacted...I would love to continue to work within student equity and empower students...I am excited for the students who I have empowered and that they will empower others."

ADVICE FOR AAP STUDENTS FROM MAYA:

"DO NOT DIMINISH YOUR OWN EXPERIENCES, YOUR EXPERIENCES HAVE POWER AND TRUTH AND SO MUCH RICH KNOWLEDGE THAT'S INGRAINED IN ALL OF US, ESPECIALLY STUDENTS THAT AAP SERVES... WE HAVE ALWAYS BEEN IN THE CUTTING EDGE AND ITS TIME TO GET BACK THE ACADEMY..."