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Chicago Scholars Foundation  
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As a queer Chicana and first-generation college graduate from DePauw University, I am applying for the Floater College Counselor position at Chicago Scholars Foundation. Chicago Scholars' mission to transform leadership through academically ambitious, first-generation college students from under-resourced communities in Chicago truly aligns with my values in life. I live to empower the generations after me especially youth of color, first-generation college students, and those with unrepresented and marginalized identities. I have immense passion working with that type of youth because I see myself as a reflecting mirror that once was in their shoes. As a first-generation Mexican-American and first-generation college graduate, the opportunity to be a resource to first-generation college student is something that I cannot pass up. I'm eager to accomplish this through Chicago Scholars. I believe my diverse background in educational research, teaching, and mentoring would make a great addition to the college counselors' team.

In Spring 2017, I was selected as a Fulbright Scholar to conduct research throughout the year of 2018 on the LGBT experience of black young adults in Salvador da Bahia, Brazil. With this Fulbright experience, I did a photo ethnography on the stories of resistance of 10 young adults who identified as black and LGBT. Outside of the research project, I taught a bilingual North American curriculum class to Brazilian high school students at Vila Campus in Salvador. I was able to engage in a bilingual classroom by sharing my experiences as a North American. In addition to international teaching experience, I have also had experience teaching and working in Chicago Public charter schools. As an Enrollment Specialist at Golder, I was responsible for recruiting incoming freshmen into Golder College Prep. I attended at least three fairs each week where I signed up students to attend our open house. On campus, I would have office hours for parents and incoming students to get help with the application form online. In addition to working in the office, I was able to teach 9<sup>th</sup> grade Civics to 180 freshmen. I believe these unique learning experiences will allow me to connect with students from all different backgrounds and identities and I know my trilingual language proficiency will also be a huge asset.

In conjunction with my research and teaching experience is a deep passion for mentoring and counseling young adults. All throughout my undergraduate career I have been committed to mentoring first-generation college students through their academic, social, and campus life experiences. I served first as a mentor and then a Peer Mentor for the First-Year Mentor Program run by the Dean of Students at DePauw University. As a mentor, I was in charge of a group of 13 first-years throughout the academic year. As a Peer Mentor for the same program, I planned all freshmen orientation and facilitated workshops for new mentors. This experience in counseling and mentoring students will serve me well in coaching the students who are a part of Chicago Scholars.

Programs like Chicago Scholars where their goal is to help first-generation students get into college are very important for our society and communities. It allows students with low resources and with marginalized identities to thrive and succeed in opportunities that may seem like an outreach or a dream. In my own experience, there were many times when I felt I did not belong. I often did not understand how I was supposed to go through college. Being a woman of color with intersectional identities automatically made me stand out in my college campus, therefore it was hard to find connections that suited my needs because of how different I was. Although this could have stopped me from fulfilling my education I did not allow it to, instead I thrived. I was lucky to find limited professors and staff throughout college that guided me and served as a light for my success because they believed strongly in my potential. The support system I gained helped me through the toughest days, but also through the simple things like applying for a semester abroad and Fulbright. The guidance and support throughout those kinds of processes is key for any college success. That is the kind of resource and support that I aim to be. The sense of not belonging and the unknown is very intimidating for first-generation college students because there is a lot to process not only academically, but socially as well. A critical challenge facing first-generation and underrepresented students is that they lack resources at home because they are the first to build the foundations of academic success in their lives. It is very important that first-generation students do not go through the process of getting into and through college alone because they truly aren't alone. They need leaders who will guide them, leaders who have been in their shoes, leaders that possess endless care and sympathy. Programs like Chicago Scholars offer that and that's why those programs are essential for our communities. I am very eager to work in an organization that not only empowers first-generation college students to be their best selves, but allows their staff to be agents of change that can help our communities by creating resilient leaders. I would love the opportunity to speak more about my background and qualifications for this role. Please feel free to email me at jane.doe@gmail.com or call me at 312-312-3123.

Best,  
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