

Student Stories Project: Felix Marquez

Audio version available at:

<http://www.alumni.indiana.edu/profiles/students/marquez.shtml>

[IU fight song]

Welcome to the Indiana University Student Stories Project, a production of the IU Alumni Association. I'm your host, Alana Salata. In this series, you'll get an insight into what it takes to be a student leader here at IU, from the perks –

“The Alumni Association here at South Bend had selected me to go to IU Bloomington’s annual LeaderShape training program for a week.”

– to the hard work –

“Time management: it’s hard because I love the group so much and I just – I want to volunteer for everything and I want to do everything.”

– to the memories that will last a lifetime.

“I’ve met so many people that have touched my life in so many ways.”

Join me on this journey through the lives of IU student leaders.

[IU fight song]

SALATA: Today we’re at IU South Bend speaking with Felix Marquez of the International Student Organization.

My name is Felix Marquez or Felix. I am originally from El Salvador – which is in Central America, for some people who don’t know, which I get that a lot. I came here when I was 16. When I say “here,” I mean the United States. I came to Maryland or Washington, D.C., the metropolitan area, about 16 years ago. I lived there for 15 years and decided to move to South Bend, Indiana, to go to school. And I am currently the president of the International Student Organization. And I am public relations with the Latino Student Union and some other clubs that it will take forever to name all of them. Personally, I like to read. I like movies a lot, although I don’t have time to watch movies.

Why did you choose to attend IU South Bend?

After working in Washington, D.C., in the metropolitan area in D.C., for like five years in a nonprofit and working with the community and being involved with the community and having a lot of activities, I decided I needed a break – and what a better break than to go to school? And I only finished my high school in Maryland, so my job was getting to a

point I couldn't go any further because I needed to have a bachelor's at least. So I decided to come to South Bend because I knew someone who is from South Bend and I came and visited one time. He took me to the campus and it was on Thanksgiving so it was nice, quiet, and coming from a city that is always loud and crowded and crazy, I kind of liked that. I'm like, hmmm, this is something I could like. So then I came and visited again and I applied to IUSB and I got accepted and here I am.

Tell me about a meaningful or enjoyable experience you have had at IU South Bend.

From the day I started at IUSB it's been a very enjoyable experience. I mean from the first day I came to orientation everybody was so kind and so nice and my first day of classes all the professors were, like, very interested in you. The classes were small and I liked that. That's been very meaningful and that kind of changed my life because when I transferred from Maryland to IU I transferred as a psychology student, but as I was taking my classes, I decided to go back to what I always wanted to do, which was teaching. So I'm like, "You know what? I think I'm going to go back to education," and now my major is education.

What advice would you give to freshmen and other students just starting out at IU South Bend?

I guess one of the advices I would give them is that first of all, if you don't know something, ask – that any student or faculty are very helpful here at IU – and also try to get involved with clubs. Don't try to get involved with four or five clubs like I have done, but try to get involved with at least one or two clubs. And, you know, be part of the IUSB community, the students. And sometimes students, you know, just decide that they don't want to get involved with any clubs just because they don't either have the time or they don't just, they don't want to do it. I would advise them to do it, you know, because you get to meet so many nice people and so many people from different backgrounds and different countries and it's just amazing how diverse the IUSB campus is.

Tell me a little about the International Student Organization at IU South Bend.

The International Student Organization is mainly – mainly but not necessarily – a group of international students. And since I've been there – since I've been the president for about a year – I've seen other students get involved that are not international. Like, you know, students who are international-born but not considered international students, or American, North American, students who want to get involved and get to know the International Student Organization. And what we do basically is that, you know, try to involve the international students with the non-internationals, with the local students, so that they can learn the American culture and so the American students can also learn from other countries, from other cultures. We have different kinds of events that help to do that. And that's our main focus, to involve the international students with the community, with the culture of this country.

How did you find out about the International Student Organization, and why did you decide to become a member?

I found out because of an International Food Fest that they had about a year or so ago. This is something that they do every year – last year was the eighth – so I found out through the International Food Fest. I was part of it – I was cooking, I was helping the Latino Student Union to set up a table and to have some representative from Latin America, and that’s how I found out about the International Student Organization. And I went to a couple of their meetings. They had openings for certain positions, and that’s how I became the president.

Tell me about an International Student Organization event or program that you were involved in that you are particularly proud of.

The past International Food Fest, which was on March 31. We got about 300 people. We cooked a lot of food from 15 different countries. Being the president, I was the one who was in charge of everything, but not doing everything myself – so, you know, being able to have people that you could count on and say, “Hey, you know, I need help with this” – so that, and being able to get the response from people and not, you know, get the response that “Oh, I don’t have time” or “Oh, I don’t want to do that,” but no, you know, people were willing to help. So I am very proud of that International Food Fest.

What challenges have you faced during the course of your participation in the International Student Organization?

Last semester, I guess one of the challenges was trying to meet with the executive committee or the executive officers, just because everybody had different times and different hours, and it was four of us, and trying to have a meeting where everybody could be there, it was tough. So, one of the challenges.

How have your leadership skills developed over the course of your participation in the International Student Organization?

I think they have developed well, and the way they have developed is that I feel that I could coordinate things better and I could work with people better now, just by, you know, this past experience with the Food Fest. That has helped a lot. And I also have learned that people are willing to help. And with the Food Fest, one of the things we also accomplished was to get more clubs involved. So this was not just an ISO event, it was other clubs’ event, because we had about six other clubs who participated with us, so I could say I got some skills from there too.

What other organizations are you a part of here at IU South Bend?

As I said earlier, I am part of the Latino Student Union, which, I’m director of communications, and I’m the vice president of the Spanish Club, which is the club that I started when I first came to IU. That was, like, the first club that I came to – I came to the

Spanish Club. And from there, I met other people from other clubs, and I met the ISO, and then I met members from the LSU and became involved. And I guess being part of the Spanish Club led me to be part of the LSU and ISO, but also led me to be part of the Gay/Straight Alliance, which – the previous president of the Spanish Club became the president of the Gay/Straight Alliance, and she asked me if I wanted to be part of her club just because she needed some help, and I said sure, you know, why not? So those are the clubs that I'm involved with right now: the Spanish Club, LSU, and the Gay/Straight Alliance, and of course the ISO.

What are your future goals, and how do you think IU South Bend has helped prepare you to meet those goals?

My future goals are to finish my bachelor's in two and a half or three at the most – I hope I can finish in two and a half years. And now being at IU and recently taking a sociology class, my professor – Dr. Griffin – she's great, and she has kind of, like, planted a seed in me that is telling me that I need to go towards my master's. So, because, you know, I came here just thinking, okay, I'm just going to get my bachelor's and I'll be good to go. But, you know, it's like, no, you need more than that. So, I think I'm going to, after I'm done with my bachelor's, take a break and then go towards my master's. So, you know, those are, like, my goals right now. And I guess the professors that IU has are very good professors and they kind of motivate you and inspire you, I guess, to continue and to be more than what you think you could be.

What will you miss the most when you graduate?

Oh, gosh. Well, if I do graduate, which I hope I do, in two and a half years, I think I will miss the professors and the students and being involved with the clubs. Because I'm planning on being involved with these clubs all through my two or three years at IU, so I'm probably going to miss that. But I guess I'll make friends, and I'm sure I'll keep in touch with them, so probably I won't miss them that much, but I will miss the activities and being here on campus, because I'm also involved with the career services office here at IU. I kind of, like, work there part-time. I work there four hours per day and only, like, three days a week. I'm probably going to miss that.

We've been talking with Felix Marquez of IU South Bend's International Student Organization.

(IU fight song)

This series was produced by the Indiana University Alumni Association, with special thanks to the IU Marching Hundred and director Dave Woodley. I'm Alana Salata.

(IU fight song)