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Statement of Purpose
Japanese Language & Culture Major

As a child, most people do not have a set goal or dream in life. Dreams, especially when we're children, tend to change as we experience various phases in our lives. However, even with the vast assortment of different aspirations I cycled through as a kid, not once did I ever imagine myself learning a second language. The irony of this now, is that I cannot even begin to imagine myself as anything but a Japanese major. The path I travelled to realize my true goal of becoming fluent in Japanese and become a student at Cal State Monterey Bay, my drive to enthusiastically develop my understanding of Japanese language and culture, the knowledge that I've gained and what I'm continuously learning, and my future dreams utilizing my major experience are all elements of my purpose here as a student of CSUMB in the Japanese major program.

The journey that led me to the decision of becoming a Japanese major was completely unplanned. Up until the late fall of my senior year in high school, I was on track to apply for art school and become an Illustrator. Art has always been a passion of mine since I was a small child, but when I developed a resume as a part of my application, I realized that my skills and experiences that correlated with Japanese language and culture far outweighed my experiences in the field of art. That realization came as a shock to me and was the turning point for me and my plans for the future. It was then that I decided to rescind my decision to become an Illustrator and apply to the Japanese major program at CSUMB.

Throughout my high school career, my drive to further my understanding of the Japanese language developed without my conscious knowledge. Small acts—such as writing the syllabic alphabet in the margins of my notes as practice and reading a used Japanese textbook during “quiet reading time”—were merely entertaining pastimes to distract me from the monotony of the daily school environment. In actuality, these minor forays into the Japanese language were evidence of a growing passion that developed beyond simple interest. Even after formal Japanese study, various amusements and pastimes such as learning different handwriting styles, studying geography, or learning the lyrics to a song are all examples of my passion for the Japanese language and culture that drive my interminable interest in the subject.

My changing pastimes are also influenced by what I've studied in the classroom. As I continue to develop and improve my understanding of Japanese language and culture, I find myself learning more than the prescribed curriculum of the course. So far in my studies, I've learned a great deal about the grammar of standard Japanese, but this only excites me for when I am able to learn more and expand my knowledge to other dialects and variations of a continuously evolving language. I've also learned a lot about Japanese culture through courses on history, cinema, and popular culture, which have exposed me to resources that I explore further after class has finished. While I value what I have learned so far in my study of Japanese language and culture, I anticipate all the experiences I will acquire in the future and appreciate what has yet to come even more.

I've discovered that my love of learning and experiencing has shifted to include a love of sharing my knowledge and experiences with others. I have never envisioned myself as a

teacher, but I've been exposed to a few gratifying experiences where I've taken the role of the educator. These experiences have changed my outlook on the possibility of entering the educational profession myself. The most significant of these experiences was definitely when I taught select elements of Japanese language and culture to members of my high school Japanese club. Through that experience, I discovered teaching was actually enjoyable, and after entering university I've had the opportunity to experience similar situations in service learning and tutoring that have solidified my appreciation of teaching. My current career goal is to become an educator, where I can continue to deepen my own understanding while also sharing my experiences with others in order to expand their understanding as well.