



CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY STANISLAUS
OFFICE OF COMMUNICATIONS & PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Article | May 31, 2013 | By [James Leonard](#)

StanGrad: Love of the Outdoors Drives Geography Student

Note: This article is part of the StanGrad series, highlighting CSU Stanislaus students graduating at commencement ceremonies May 30 and 31. [Click here](#) for more.

As a child, Aldo Garcia used paper maps while playing navigator on his family's frequent road trips throughout California — trips that typically involved hunting and fishing with his father.

Years later, as a geography student at CSU Stanislaus, Garcia found himself using computerized systems to create maps of the Sierra Nevada watershed. He'll graduate today with a bachelor's degree in [geography](#), and the Sierra Nevada project was part of a [USDA internship](#) he hopes will lead to work using geographic information systems in the national forest.

A Patterson native, Garcia moved to Southern California after high school but returned after six years to continue his education.

"I started thinking about my academic path and realized that I was not happy living in a large urban setting," he said. "I knew that I eventually wanted to work outdoors in the Sierra, and I knew I would have a greater opportunity to do that if I completed my studies locally."

Garcia was an enthusiastic student who was quickly embraced by the geography faculty at CSU Stanislaus, and he became active on campus. He has been vice president of the Geography Club for five semesters, organizing trips to recreational areas throughout the state and creating electronic waste recycling events for the campus and local community.

It hasn't always been an easy journey. Garcia began as a part-time student while working full time and will finish as a full-time student while working part time. He also lost his father in

(more)

January, but the experiences they shared in the outdoors and the support and advice he's received from the university and his family — including two sisters who are college graduates — have helped him along the way.

"The biggest challenge I have faced is finding the balance between school, family and work," Garcia said. "My geography professors and classmates have been very supportive during my time at CSU Stanislaus and have helped me through tough times."

#StanGrad File

Name: Aldo Garcia

Hometown: Patterson

Degree/Credential: Bachelor of Arts in Geography (with a minor in geology)

What memories stand out most from your time at CSU Stanislaus?

"Being in the Geography Club gave me the opportunity to socialize with professors and students and establish great friendships. The club and geography department went on many interesting trips that students enjoyed and still talk about, and the club also held several events on campus for students and the community."

Which faculty or staff member had the greatest impact on you, and why?

"Jennifer Helzer was the first person to welcome me to CSU Stanislaus and was very enthusiastic about me being a geography major. She also encouraged me to participate in activities such as presenting at three California Geographical Society conferences. Additionally, Peggy Hauselt has provided me with career guidance during my USDA internship, and that has given me professional skills that I will apply in my career."

What advice would you give to current and future students?

"My advice is to be as active on your campus as possible. Join a club and become involved with your department. It is a great way to meet new people and gain experience that will prepare you for your career."