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For Endurance, Persistence and Courage

Paige Farrenkopf found her passion early. By age 15, she had become a mental health advocate, and has subsequently found ways to connect that advocacy to other areas of her life.

At UC Santa Barbara, Farrenkopf, a sociology major, worked with Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS), to develop a 43-page binder with recommendations for a mental health module for all incoming students. Beyond simply developing the idea, she took a bill-writing class to learn how to formalize her plan into policy, and met with CAPS staff members, A.S. senators and UC Santa Barbara's student government to discuss her proposal.

In addition to her work on mental health campuswide, Farrenkopf saw a need within her own sorority. She developed a Mental Health Chair for her chapter to provide education and programming around issues of mental health and wellbeing. As a result of her initiative, seven of the campus's nine sororities now have a mental health chairwoman, and Farrenkopf has been working with sorority presidents throughout the UC system to implement similar positions on other campuses.

Farrenkopf's interest in mental health is rooted in an internship she did with pediatric cancer patients, and through her work at UC Santa Barbara she developed an interest in the psychological aspects of cancer treatment. Coincidentally, she hit what she describes as "a small road bump along the way," when she embarked on a

health journey of her own.

Through medical challenges over the past several years, Farrenkopf cited the mental health benefits she derived from continuing her education, and has maintained a rigorous schedule of academic and service work throughout this time.

For this commitment, she has been awarded the Alyce Marita Whitted Memorial Award. Established in 1993, the award is presented to a non-traditional graduating senior who has demonstrated endurance, persistence and courage in the face of extraordinary challenges while in the pursuit of an academic degree.

Farrenkopf has written that she firmly believes in maintaining a positive attitude, and that her experiences have taught her to appreciate her mental health. In the words of her nominator, “Paige is remarkable both for what she has overcome and for what she has contributed to the campus community.”

After graduation, Farrenkopf will embark on a new journey, as a research assistant at the Johns Hopkins University School of Public Health.

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About UC Santa Barbara

The University of California, Santa Barbara is a leading research institution that also provides a comprehensive liberal arts learning experience. Our academic community of faculty, students, and staff is characterized by a culture of interdisciplinary collaboration that is responsive to the needs of our multicultural and global society. All of this takes place within a living and learning environment like no other, as we draw inspiration from the beauty and resources of our extraordinary location at the edge of the Pacific Ocean.