Los Angeles native and Salvadoran American Alberto Rivera was drawn to Tufts during his junior year in high school, when he attended the Voices of Tufts Diversity Experience. Now a first generation college student, he says that the Voices program first exposed him to what “college could feel like.” He saw unbreakable bonds being fostered on campus, and he knew from that moment on that he wanted to be a Jumbo.

As a senior on the Hill, Alberto has spent more than three years building his own bonds. A member of the all-male step dance team, BlackOut, Alberto says, “whether I’m dealing with academic concerns or personal ones, I know that my teammates support me.” He also works as an intern at the Tufts Latino Center, sharing his own experiences in higher education as an ambassador to incoming students.

Of course, academics are Alberto’s principal reason for being at Tufts. As an Environmental Studies and Environmental Geology double major, he is well on his way to building a career that aligns with his love for the ocean. A class that Alberto took on geographic information system mapping was particularly motivating and useful, and he was grateful to apply those skills to his summer internship at the Aquarium of the Pacific in Long Beach, California, an experience made possible by the Norton Nickerson Internship Fund in Environmental Studies. “My skills in GIS mapping made me stand out against the other interns, and allowed me to take on projects that I otherwise wouldn’t have been asked to do,” says Alberto.

Alberto graduates this coming May and while he’s still contemplating his next move, he envisions a future career in research, which he “fell in love with” during his time at the Aquarium of the Pacific. He’s hopeful that the research he does in the future will allow him to advocate for something he is passionate about, the protection of the oceans.

Alberto is grateful for the financial support of the Norton Nickerson Internship Fund, which allowed him the freedom to explore his passions this summer and plan for his future. “I couldn’t have done anything this extraordinary without the support. Thank you very much for this internship. I was the first in my family to go to college and now, thanks to this reality, I can also think about graduate school.”