CABE congratulates Olympia Martínez for her dedication to becoming a bilingual teacher! The following describes her personal experience and educational philosophy.

Personal Statement
American history has demonstrated continuous desires to preserve a “White American image.” In my history class, I clearly remember learning about the attempts to assimilate Native Americans into American culture, by stripping them of their language and culture. The tragic desire to Americanize individuals has caused languages and cultures to diminish throughout generations. As a result, I have seen families in my community decide not to teach their children Spanish. Unfortunately, when this occurs numerous opportunities are lost to learn from each other and empathize with one another. I want to become a bilingual teacher to preserve and celebrate different languages and cultures. I want to encourage bilingualism beyond simply learning a language, but also allow individuals to immerse themselves in the culture and community. Continuous research supports multiple benefits of bilingualism, but when a student is a non-native English speaker, it is often labeled as a deficit or as a barrier to their learning. This ignores all the positive attributes a bilingual student has and can contribute to society. Schools often do not offer secondary language classes until students are in high school. I specifically want to become a bilingual teacher in primary school because I believe the earlier language immersion is implemented; the more access students have to the benefits of bilingual education. I want to provide immersive learning experiences for my students. As a bilingual teacher I want to support children and their families from diverse backgrounds, while developing empathy towards all cultures.

Educational Philosophy
My educational philosophy is to provide exceptional learning opportunities for all my students. I believe that everyone can learn and grow as an individual, regardless of who they are or where they come from. Not only is this part of my philosophy but is also the way I want my future students to think about themselves and others. This idea of growth mindset prevents students from limiting themselves based on what they already know or do not know. When my students encounter a problem or a limitation, I want them to view the situation as something that they cannot do YET. This means that they recognize that they are on a progress to learning and understanding. I believe that the growth mindset mentality is important to implement in primary school because it shapes how students see themselves and has an impact of how they will encounter real world problems. This is a philosophy that it is important to implement in bilingual education because the student population in bilingual education is diverse. In a bilingual classroom, there are both native English Learners and non-native English Learners. This means that there are students with different skills and abilities. As a teacher, I see every student as an individual with their own unique experiences that they can contribute to learning. It is my responsibility to provide students with the opportunities to learn, while creating an environment where students feel capable of learning.

¡Felicidades, Olympia!