

## Student Spotlight on Mariah Ruelas

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Nominated by: Beth Reid- TRiO Advisor

A four-year high school volleyball athlete turned Honor Roll college student with a fulltime job for the Plumas County Probation Office, Mariah Ruelas is currently in her third semester at Feather River College. A Quincy local, Mariah says, “It was a logical decision to come to FRC.” By staying in Plumas County, Mariah remains close to friends and family while saving money for her transfer to the four-year college level. During her first semester at FRC, Mariah played Sand Volleyball but decided not to pursue athletics so that she could work more aggressively toward her career and education.



That said, the transition was not easy. “It was a struggle...after years of being part of a team and the bond it created. When it’s gone, it’s like where did all my friends go?” Mariah offered this advice for those who might be making the transition from student-athlete to student, “You have to prepare yourself...knowing that it’s not going to go on forever can be heartbreaking but throwing yourself into your studies really helps with the transition...”

Mariah’s senior project at Quincy High School was interning at the Plumas County Probation Office. From then on, Mariah set her career path in Criminal Justice. Mariah showed so much promise that when she graduated, she was offered a job which she gladly accepted. After Feather River College, Mariah plans to pursue a Bachelor’s degree in Criminal Justice stating, “I want to become a probation officer, maybe, but I’m keeping my options open...” Asked about her work with the Probation Office, Mariah says, “It is awesome...I’m like a paid

intern...almost anything that I'm interested in, they let me do. Right now I'm going to court and taking notes on the proceedings. Then, I input those notes into the software. I also assist the probation officers with any duties they might need me to do. It gives me valuable insight into what I might potentially be doing someday."

Mariah says her inspiration is her mother. "My mom, defiantly, inspires me. She like comes from the bottom and just keeps going up ... she didn't graduate from high school but she got her G.E.D. and now she is an insurance broker." Besides going to college fulltime and working fulltime, Mariah hikes, plays volleyball, and shops. Some of her favorite courses at the college have been in the fields of Criminal Justice and English stating, "I struggled so much in English in high school, but once I got to FRC, I was given the help I needed and now I'm getting A's on my papers." Mariah listed Beth Reid and Chris Connell as pivotal instructors in her development as a writer and student. When she arrived at FRC, Mariah began to take her studies far more seriously. Mariah says, "I realized my senior year of high school that I wouldn't be able to slide by with "C's" and do what I wanted to with my life. I wanted to have options available



for myself. I really applied myself, and I didn't want to be limited because of my poor grades."

Maintaining good grades is a top priority for her at this point. She uses the resources available to do so "through the TRIO program and their tutoring services... I find it really helpful when they check up

on me with my academics..." Mariah did very well in her first year as a college student. Her advice to incoming freshman is to "Put your academics first. College can be a difficult time filled with distractions and you are going to want to make sure that you make the most of your time here. In the end, we are all here for the education."