

August 21, 2009

Dear Class of '55,

I want to extend my gratitude that you decided to offer me a scholarship to go towards my study abroad opportunity in Buenos Aires, Argentina. I have gained an incredible amount of knowledge and fluency during my time abroad.

I enrolled and completed seven classes while in Buenos Aires at the University of Belgrano, all of which developed a holistic picture of the cultural, political, and social aspects of Argentina. All of the classes were instructed in Spanish to international students all over the world. The benefit of having native professors with no ability to speak English was vital to deepen my fluency in Spanish.

Independent of the Latin American Studies classes, the highlight of my academic success was the fact that I completed a class called the Biological Basis of Neurological and Psychological Studies conducted in Spanish with Argentine students, receiving the equivalent of a B+. By enrolling in such a class, I challenged myself to learn the technical vocabulary needed to describe biological processes in Spanish. I surprised myself by receiving grades that were well above average, which allowed me to gain a new confidence about my abilities in both of my majors Spanish and Biochemistry/Molecular Biology.

Outside of the classroom, I kept busy volunteering for a month at Club ACORN, an organization founded by two American women who wanted to provide children of one of the most dangerous neighborhoods with a free-of-charge after school center. The most memorable day was when I helped with a cooking class, where we made empanadas (the US equivalent of Hot Pockets, but homemade of course) with the kids. That day, I saw a little girl after she just completed her first day of kindergarten. She especially liked making empanadas with the group.

I also really enjoyed participating in a tango exhibition for the other students of the university from what I learned in my tango dance class held once a week. The event was called 'Tango and Churros,' and I got to wear my nice black dress while performing with another student from Italy.

Not only did volunteering enrich my experience in Buenos Aires, but also the chance to live with a host family did wonders for my fluency in Spanish and for my cultural awareness. Living with Marcela, my host mom, and her twenty-four year old daughter Mariana provided me with a safe place to practice and experiment speaking Spanish. One of the most memorable nights was when Marcela hosted her birthday party at the house, inviting all of her friends to eat and enjoy each other's company. I really got to have several deep conversations with a few people at the party who later told Marcela how surprised they were about how eloquently I spoke Spanish. I was happy to know that I left a good impression of my culture, while learning more about theirs.

I cannot thank you enough for financially supporting me during this trip abroad. All of my experiences in Buenos Aires will last a lifetime. This trip was overwhelmingly critical for my personal development since it pushed me in ways that I could not have anticipated. I now feel much more self-reliant and resilient. Furthermore, my focus is much clearer now academically and professionally. Living in Argentina demonstrated that I need to not only do my absolute best in my remaining classes at Cornell, but also I need to speak Spanish in every possible situation to maintain my fluency. This fluency

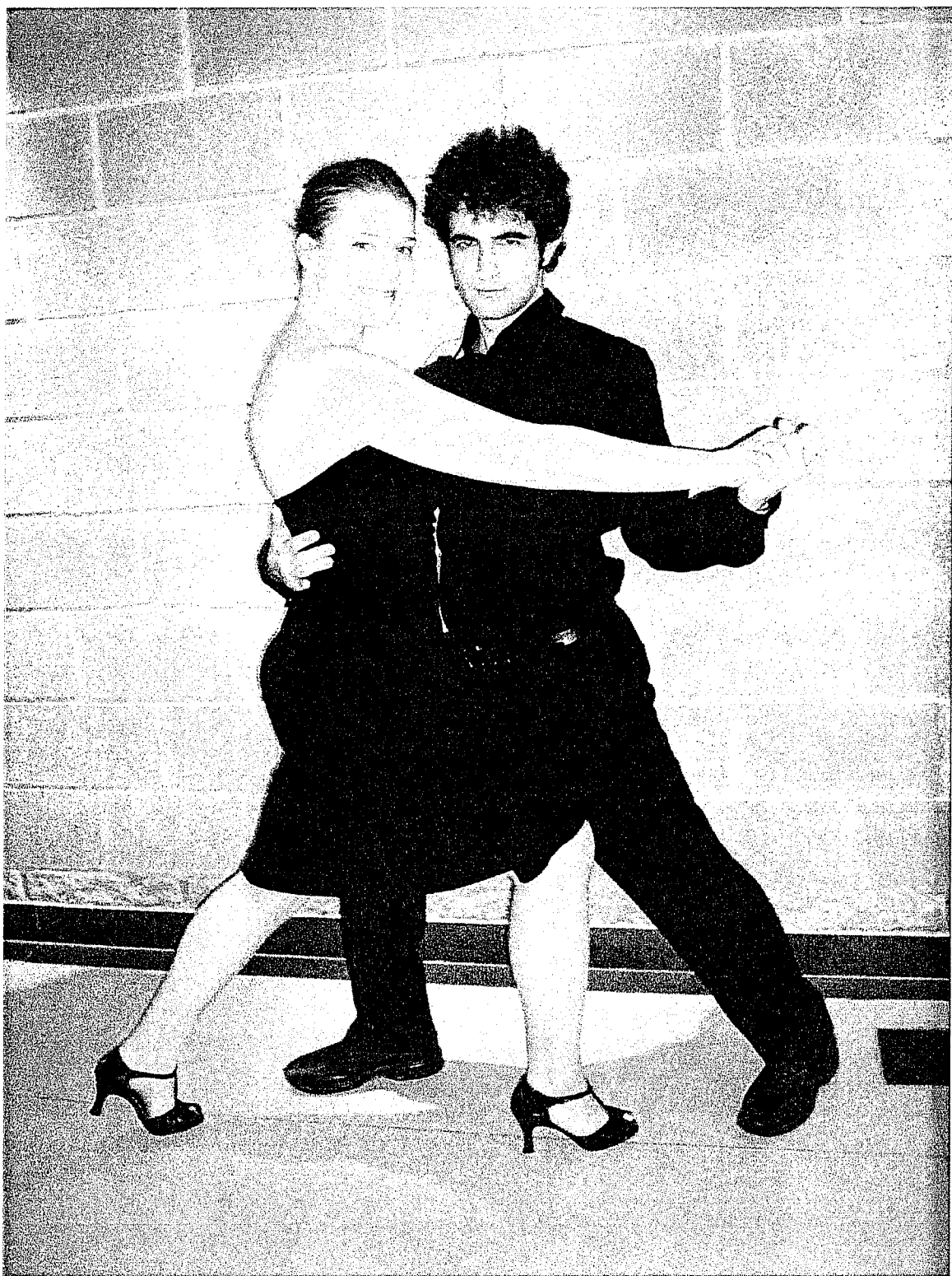
will impact my career goals of wanting to be a doctor since still most doctors rely on translators even with a rudimentary knowledge of Spanish. I hope to never have a need for a third party because with my level I will be more than competent to work independently

Again, thank you all so much for your support.

Sincerely,



My host mom Marcela with her daughter Mariana (Maku) and I at the birthday party.



Posing with Giulio, my tango dance partner.



Me dancing during the tango exhibition