

Leticia Hernandez, a mentee who gives back

As a junior in honors accounting at the University of Illinois Urbana/Champaign, Leticia Hernandez already has a lot on her plate. That doesn't stop this Palatine resident, however, from finding time to help others, and finding new ways to broaden her experiences.

Leticia, who inspires her two younger sisters as a first-generation college student, is an avid volunteer with the Illini Mentoring Program. Every Saturday morning she mentors children at the local Boys & Girls Club. And through the UChange program, she also assists a high school mentee with navigating the college application process.

"She is very motivated, an excellent student and a leader in a number of clubs at U of I," says Georgeanna Mehr, her EB211 mentor. "Leticia is a joy to work with."

Leticia was selected for the MLT Career Prep Program, which focuses on the professional development of minority college students. This summer, she earned a paid internship at Deloitte, one of the top accounting and business consulting firms in the world. She has accepted a second internship next summer with its Chicago office. That work experience, along with her honors classes at UIUC, has convinced Leticia to focus her career choice in accounting in the audit field. She intends to pursue graduate school and complete UIUC's 1-year masters accounting program to become a CPA.

As a motivated learner, Leticia also strives to broaden her experiences outside the classroom setting. Her efforts were rewarded with a 9-day trip to Vienna, Austria last May through the Gies Scholar program. In addition to attending seminars in Vienna, she was able to experience a new culture and make some international connections.

If you think accounting is a "dry" career, Leticia says think again. Her favorite accounting professor doesn't lecture, and instead he challenges the class to work through his problems to seek solutions. Their "think tank" approach works, and it has convinced Leticia that she has made the right career choice.

In the accounting world, it all adds up to a motivated and giving student who will be in demand when she graduates.