



First-Gen Voices: Creative and Critical Narratives on the First-Generation College Experience

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On My Heart

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First Gen Journal Submission: On My Heart

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Name: Chaylah Williams

“On My Heart”

Abstract:

I never thought that when I would start traveling internationally that it would be alone I always imagined it with my family, but never did I imagine traveling to really interact with the communities either I always thought of traveling as leisure. I guess I could say this impression was not implemented when OI started traveling as I started to notice how I didn't want to do touristy things and I really just wanted to be. To be there to be present to be aware and I think that is what I enjoyed the most about my trip to Costa Rica. I really enjoyed learning from the indigenous people and immersive myself not only in the culture and daily lives and practices. Just being able to build connections with people in the communities that we are visiting and learning more about their daily lives, what they are impacted by, and what is going on from the voices and perspectives of those living in the reality of the politics and news that we see from a screen. My most significant learning experience this far was learning about the demonstrations in Nicaragua and how that has affected the lives of those who have fled to Costa Rica as refugees. It was also really insightful to learn more about the Costa Rican government and be reassured that America is not the only place with significant issues regarding politics and economic policy/structure. I would like to think that my favorite moment from this trip was singing Natasha Bedingfield in the rain but that was just a small part of the light I was able to see in people that I share something with, being first generation.

Our reflection sessions are something that I hold sacred and are a highlighted bonding moment that I have never experienced with any large group of people ever before. I am forever grateful for the experience, the good and the bad, as well as the perspective that has been awakened within me post-trip.