

## Spotlight on



CAMINO Peer Mentor  
Christopher Balam  
Kinesiology Program

### Christopher's Pathway or "Camino":

Since beginning as an undergraduate Kinesiology major at CSUN in 2011, Chris has explored many different avenues for a career he can be passionate about. From physical therapy to public health, he has searched, dabbled and experimented. However, not until getting involved in programs such as 100 Citizens and CAMINO did he feel he was on the right path. 100 Citizens, a free community-based exercise program, showed Chris how much he enjoys working with the general population. Leading up to that point, he had been sports performance driven and was solely interested in working with elite athletes. 100 Citizens gave Chris an opportunity to use his knowledge of human exercise physiology, biomechanics and motor behavior to give back to the people who truly needed help. Currently, Chris is a Masters Student in the Exercise Physiology program at CSUN. He is conducting research on community-based exercise programs, via the 100 Citizens program. He holds positions as Exercise Director at 100 Citizens, Personal Training Supervisor at the CSUN Student Recreation Center (SRC), and CAMINO as a Peer Mentor. Chris has also taught in the Kinesiology department as a Teaching Associate.

### What does CAMINO mean to you?

"To me, CAMINO has meant possibility. Through unique and uncommon opportunities provided through this program, I have been able travel across the U.S. for a conference held at the National Institutes of Health (NIH), present my thesis alongside fellow graduate students at "Thesis Talks", and gain employment as a Peer Mentor to first year graduate students seeking guidance. I would have never guessed any of these opportunities to be a part of my path, but CAMINO made it possible. CAMINO has exposed me to people and ideas I might have not encountered, otherwise. This program has provided tremendous exposure to opportunities, and continues to aid in my professional development.

While attending the conference at NIH, I networked with some of the most influential researchers currently conducting research. I explored different careers that are possible for students with my background, Kinesiology- Exercise Physiology. I also connected with students discovering their own paths, who have generously shared their knowledge, perspective and insight.

CAMINO has expanded my career outlook exponentially. I thought I knew exactly what my career possibilities were limited to before affiliating myself with CAMINO, now the possibilities appear limitless."