

Labels and Stereotypes

When I first landed in the United States, I was quickly labelled as an alien even before I stepped out of the airport.

When I enrolled in a local high school, I was instantly labelled as a non-native English speaker even before I filled my forms

When I entered my math class, my teacher assumed I would be extremely good at math because I was Asian

When I was applying for colleges, my college counselor said, I shouldn't dream big and apply to private schools

When I finally entered college, the admins said I entered as a low-income, first-generation student

When I declared my major, a lot of people discouraged not to major in Environmental sciences because there weren't enough jobs

I began to question, "Can a non-native English speaking, low-income, first-generation immigrant, dream big?"

Yes, being a FLI student means I will have to think about money.

It means I will have to think about having enough food.

It means my options are limited

It means my connections are limited

It means I will probably have to work twice as hard

It means people will call me broke

But it is also more than a label, more than stereotypes, and more than assumptions

I am not your statistics to show off,

I am also not your guinea pig to experiment on,

Know my story,

Know my resilience,

Know my identity,

Know that I am proud to be a First-Generation, Low-Income student

Know that I am proud of the experiences that have shaped me

Know that I am less of *your* success story and more of *mine*