As a naïve and self-centered first-year undergrad, I thought that the greatest achievement in higher education was the incessant and individualistic pursuit of knowledge and wisdom—an endeavor which turned out to be a lonely and kind of unfulfilling path. When I started to work at SLAC as a private tutor the second semester of my freshman year, it impacted how I perceived education and knowledge.

I've been working at SLAC for four years now. I've been a private tutor, SI, and now a lab tutor (my dream job as a freshman), and I have realized that I am nothing but a vessel of knowledge; my purpose is to share and enlighten others in a way that it gives meaning to their lives, rather than make it dull and prosaic. Information is power, knowledge gives color, dimension, depth, sensation, and even leads to ideas, then questions. I think that is the magic inside great minds, in other words, that such attitude toward knowledge is the engine that powers the momentum of self-improvement as well as appreciation for life and others around you. SLAC taught me all of this, either directly or indirectly.

Students look up to us. Sometimes they regard us as higher beings, but they should know that people are rarely inherently capable of greatness (whatever that may be for you). Greatness comes from trying, a lot, and learning after failing—a lot, too. Passions don't come from epiphanies; they come from experience, from living, from truly feeling, and from giving your ALL day in and day out. SLAC taught me to love what I do. When you love what you do, people notice (when you don't, they notice even more), and if others are going notice me, I want them to know that I owe who I am today to SLAC.

Thank you, SLAC, for having me as a tutor all of these years. Thank you for giving me the opportunity and guidance to become a better person, and support and guide others to do so as well.

Erica Osta