

# There are No Long Shots

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## Accepted at Yale, Columbia: USU Eastern Student Proves "There Are No Long Shots"



Ryan Cano with Professor John Weber. Photo by Tyson Chappell

Crediting his mother for instilling the value of education, Ryan Cano prepares to attend the Summer Medical and Dental Education Program at Yale University in New Haven, Connecticut.

Cano will shadow physicians at Yale's New Haven Hospital with a curriculum similar to what he will be exposed to in medical school. He applied to this program at Yale and Columbia universities and was accepted to both.

Born in Price, Utah, his family moved to Huntington when he was a toddler. He attended schools in Emery County until he was 16 when he transferred to Carbon High School because it was a bigger school and had more opportunities for his major. He also liked that Utah State University Eastern was close and he planned to take classes at the university while in high school.

The downside of the move was he left his parents and siblings to move in with his aunt in Price.

"My parents grew up in Mexico and were dirt poor," he said. "It was tough for them growing up. My mom graduated from high school, but my father never had the chance to graduate. Because of the socioeconomic conditions in Mexico, it was not possible to economically support a family. They uprooted and moved to the United States in search of a better life."

Mom was driven to make sure I knew the value of education," he said. "The intrinsic drive that she taught me was that through education I could better myself, help more people and change the world."

He did well while a student at CHS, graduating with a 4.0 GPA while working 30 hours a week and participating in extra-curricular clubs and activities.

While in high school, "I enrolled in every honors and advanced placement course I could," he said. It was in honors biology that his penchant for science was drastically amplified and his career goal became focused on medicine.

He spent two summers at the Utah Rural Health Scholar's Health Career Exploration Camp and remembers a second-year medical student from the Mayo Medical School say, "there are no long shots, only unprepared shooters." Those words made an impression on him.

Cano started shadowing doctors Shane Gagon and Scott Justesen whenever he had time. "Dr. Gagon introduced me to the science and art of medicine plus the other side of the profession: the long hours and stacks of paperwork."

When he arrived at USU Eastern full time, he embraced every pre-medical class he could take from one of his three favorite professors: John Weber, Wayne Hatch and Tyson Chappell.

"The hardest class I have ever taken was anatomy from Dr. Chappell, but it was also the most enjoyable class I have ever taken." His fondest memory was studying the cadaver in Chappell's lab.

He appreciated all the extra time Weber spends out of class with his students. "He's very invested in the students," he said. "He even spent part of his fall break helping students with chemistry. Not many professors would give up their vacation to help students like he does."

Cano maintains a high GPA while at Eastern, with only two "A" minuses and a "B" in his perfect row of straight "A's." In addition to his classes, he holds the position of student association's diversity representative, chemistry department tutor and lab assistant, Parkdale Health and Rehabilitation nursing facility volunteer, CHS physics and biology tutor, all while working 15-20 hours per week as a bilingual communication assistant at CaptionCall Communications. "I need gas money so I have to work during the week," he smiles.

"My mother told me to reach for the stars and believe in myself," he said. "The health-care path is the way I have chosen to pursue my dreams." When he graduates from Eastern in the spring, he will leave behind some of his favorite professors. "Students can connect with the faculty at USU Eastern," he said. "They provide a lot of one-on-one attention, know your name and mentor students. Each professor made me feel important."

He hopes to defy the stereotypes imposed upon him and does not want to be a physician simply to break the mold. "I want to use my knowledge and humanity to make a positive contribution to the lives of individual people and society as a whole.

~ *Susan Polster*