

# STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

**Damien Scott, enrolled member of the Yurok tribe and  
descendant of the Karuk and  
Tolowa**



# SPOTLIGHT

School has always been extremely difficult for me, not because I wasn't smart enough or lacked the wit to catch on to course material but because I felt so out of place and disconnected from my environment. Leaving the reservation, a place I had lived almost my entire life with my mom, siblings, cousins and grandparents was a huge culture shock for me. I felt lost and disconnected from my people for quite a long time after leaving. Not being a 5 or at most 50-minute drive from my people was something I really struggled with. I started taking Native American Studies courses because I knew I could apply them to my future career and the course material would make me feel closer to home. I have really enjoyed them and felt so welcomed that I decided to enroll in the Native American College at Sacramento State.

I now will be pursuing a minor in Native American studies alongside my BS in Biology. Since joining the program, I have already built more foundation and a more home like feeling at Sacramento State which I am extremely grateful for. Currently and for the past 6 plus years, I have been a veterinary assistant for an amazing organization called Public Vet. In California, we primarily focus our efforts on the Yurok, Hoopa and Tolowa reservations in Northern California providing low cost spay and neuter services to these severely underserved areas. After graduating from Sacramento State, my goal is to attend UC Davis for the veterinary program. My overall educational and career goals are to graduate with my Degree in Veterinary Medicine (DVM) and return home to the reservation, providing the necessary vet care that my people need to ensure health for the animals as well as their owners. We cannot have a healthy community if disease, parasites and animal populations are not properly managed. I feel like as Native people we have always been connected to animals and my hope is that I can use my NAS minor along with my DVM to blend the relationships of culture, respect and health within Native communities throughout California.