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By Klydi Heywood

Nathaly Ramirez says her disease does not define her.

In October 2012, Nathaly, a Huntsman MBA student on scholarship from the Dominican Republic, was diagnosed with Lupus, an autoimmune disease where the immune system becomes hyperactive and attacks healthy tissues. But this hasn’t slowed Nathaly down.

“Having Lupus is a part of me, but is not me,” she said.

After returning from the Dominican Republic in September to begin the one-year MBA program, Nathaly began to feel weak and became sick. At first, the doctors couldn’t explain what was wrong with Nathaly, and for her, the pain and inflammation was getting worse.

“After a while, I was limping, and I had a really hard time grasping to things,” Nathaly said.
When she was finally able to get to a specialist, he diagnosed her on the spot. Lupus is a treatable disease, and for Nathaly, it is controllable. She is now visiting a doctor twice a week and takes medication regularly.

“There are trials in life and you need to work your hardest to get through them,” she said, “and understand if you need help, you can ask for it.”

One form of help Nathaly has received from the school is the support of the faculty.

“Nathaly has persevered in her studies, through even the tough times she’s had this year,” said Kathy McKonkie, associate MBA director. “I’ve watched her quietly endure and succeed, and I’ve been amazed and grateful for her example of strength and fortitude.”

Nathaly explained that the faculty has been supportive. She earned her undergraduate degree in international business from the Huntsman School in 2011. Upon her completion of the MBA program this June, Nathaly hopes to work with non-governmental organizations like HELP International or the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

“I am all about culture, diversity, and solidarity, she said. “I think a lot of that is because of the Huntsman School.”