

UVSC SUCCESS!

Michelle Despain



Michelle Despain '04 began luge in 2003 after her boyfriend, Chris (an Olympic luger), suggested she'd be good at it. The 21-year-old former UVSC ballroom dancer found the 80-mile-per-hour run exhilarating. Her natural talent for the sport and encouragement from family and friends lead Despain to her coach, Ioan Apostol from Romania and to the 2006 Winter Olympics in Torino, Italy. But she will not be racing for team U.S.A.; instead, as a dual citizen, she will represent Argentina, her mother's homeland and her birthplace.

"I love both the United States and Argentina," she said. "But I'm representing Argentina in the Olympics because my roots are there."

Despain is the first woman athlete to represent Argentina in luge and she is among the youngest international luge athletes to place in the top 40 of the world's women luge competitors.

As a student at UVSC, Despain never dreamed the Olympics were in her future. With an associate's degree in psychology, Despain plans to continue her education and hopes to pursue a career working with youth.

"I never thought all this would really happen to me," she said. "I would encourage students at UVSC to keep pursuing their dreams because you never know when you will be given an opportunity of a lifetime"