

Minerva Scholarship

By Jen Hsu

To this day, receiving the 2005 Minerva scholarship as the Business major scholar remained as one of the defining moments in my undergraduate experience. I remembered sharing this honor with other extraordinary women that day, including my mother whom inspired me with her dedication and resilience in everything that she does.

The scholarship could not have come at a more appropriate time. As a transfer student at UCLA, it gave me the privilege to live on campus as I began to establish my own UCLA community. The financial support through this award definitely lightened up my mom's obligation towards educational expenses, especially since she had the financial obligation to fund my brother's college tuition at a private institution.

In retrospect, receiving the scholarship does not automatically guarantee a smooth transition from my community college experience to UCLA. Unfortunately, shortly after the conference, I suffered from a serious ailment that required medical treatment, causing me to miss two weeks of classes and resulted in a low GPA. In spite of the illness, I decided to complete this first quarter at UCLA in order to advance my studies. I continued to enroll in more challenging courses beyond my degree requirement to enrich my knowledge in accounting. I often recalled Maria's encouragement at the conference, "Whenever you get discouraged, just look at this medallion and remember what you have done to get here."

In addition to taking the initiative to solidify my academic record, I took the initiative to slightly extend the duration of my undergraduate career in order to take advantage of the various learning opportunities UCLA offers. I reserved the last portion of the Minerva scholarship for an intensive summer program with UCLA Anderson School of Management where I had the opportunities to interact with entrepreneurs and complete MBA-level courses as an undergraduate student. The academic and networking experiences through the Entrepreneurship Institute greatly exceeded my expectations. It also gave me the foundation to apply my skills towards the theory-based classes from the Economic department as well as completing the Decision Science and Analysis course with UCLA Anderson's full-time MBA program.

My last two quarters at UCLA allowed me to validate everything I was looking for in an undergraduate experience. While working two jobs and keeping a 20-hour work schedule, I completed up to 20 units per quarter. Academically, I finally earned the permission to conduct an one-on-one research with an Economics professor in the topic of my choice. At the same time, I participated in a two-quarter long program through UCLA's Theater Department as I explored the realm of Entertainment Design with the designers from Walt Disney Imagineering. Through my position as a Human Resource Assistant with UCLA Anderson's Executive MBA Program, I got the opportunity to learn from the students managing various companies and corporations. Meanwhile, although the application process did not go as smoothly as I first anticipated, I was finally accepted into Mortar Board National College Senior Honor Society. Words cannot express the thrill and blessing I get as I promote community literacy with other fellow outstanding scholars from the UCLA Chapter. Meanwhile, having the chance to train with

remarkable faculty and student dancers from Department of World Arts and Culture gave me the chance to be involved in the artistic community within UCLA.

Being a Minerva Scholarship recipient reinforced the need for me to be a proactive and diligent scholar, but it definitely urged me the importance of giving back to the community. The award exemplifies my achievement as an intellectual and an active member in the society, but the most meaningful aspect of this award is how many people have devoted themselves to me and helped me to get to this point. I have so many people to be thankful for, and I wish there could be a plaque for me to engrave all of the people who have influenced me to become the scholar that I am. Whether my immediate challenge is to pass the CPA exam or transition into my position as a Financial Analyst, I hope I can reflect on this journey and continue to fight my way through each chapter in my life. With my dad's optimism, my mom's resilience, my friends' and families' encouragement, and perhaps a dose of humor—nothing is impossible.