Painting the picture of an MPP student’s day

In a Q&A complementing our Flickr tour of a day in the life of Yi Wu, the 2019 MPP candidate reveals what attending GPS looks like today

By Rachel Hommel | GPS News

A champion of table tennis, you can always spot Yi Wu on the top floor of the UC San Diego School of Global Policy and Strategy’s (GPS’s) student lounge. An avid fan of sports, Wu likes to stay active – from badminton to skiing and gym time at RIMAC.

After visiting San Diego on a family trip, she fell in love with the culture of the city. As an undergraduate labor and social security major, Wu was eager to expand her studies into the global arena, as well as experience American life as a Master of Public Policy student.

“One of my instructors at Shanghai University of Finance and Economics recommended UC San Diego, for both its beauty as well as its strength in domestic and global policy analysis,” recalls Wu.

When not staying active, Wu can be found studying with friends in one of the many common areas at GPS or in the kitchen cooking up traditional Chinese dishes for friends. Ask her about her favorite meal!
What drove you to GPS to pursue your MPP?

“Based on theories I learned and studied at Shanghai University of Finance and Economics, the MPP degree offered deeper analysis into what I am interested in. As an undergraduate, I worked as a research assistant where I focused on pension systems, healthcare and innovative types of traditional business. I was greatly motivated and eager to pursue a professional study with quantitative and qualitative methods around these public issues.”

So, how was your first quarter?

“It definitely took time to adjust to American life and my new environment as an international student but it didn’t take me long! I didn’t live with my family during high school or university, so the transition was not hard.”

Is there anything you wish you would have known as a prospective student that you know now?

“I really enjoy that GPS dives deeply into some of the most innovative world policies, with a domestic as well as global context. The curriculum is a rigorous mix of quantitative and qualitative methods to prove what we’ve proposed.”

“Frankly, there are some difficulties for me as an international student, including the language barrier, background differences and the reservation of knowledge. One efficacious way I think I’ve overcome this is to talk more, read more and make efficient use of every minute!”

What motivates you to come to campus every day?

“While the quantitative methods courses are difficult, they are very useful at helping me gain an overview and deeper understanding of the methodologies and policies we may face in the future. Though the classes are difficult, I really enjoy them! It makes me very excited to see the learning curve from QM1 through QM3.”

Where do you hope to be after graduation?

“I’ve always wanted to make some contribution to the world, either in the public
or nonprofit sector. One place I really want to work is The World Bank. That would be a dream. I think it’s a place rich with different ideas and backgrounds, a place where I can take advantage of the most opportunities for myself.”

Where can we find you when you’re not on campus?

“I love playing sports with my friends. We just got back from my first ski trip. I loved it and I didn’t fall! My parents always tell me to keep fit, it’s their first advice! I also love going to the beach to watch the sunset, clear my head and get ready for the next day.”

Which professors or classes have made a lasting impression on you thus far?

“I really enjoyed Professor Gordon McCord’s class on Microeconomics of Policy and Management. It’s a great overview of the microeconomics environment. It tends to be more theoretical and is useful for future applications on economics and the finance sector. McCord’s classes are very memorable.”

What is your area of specialization and why did you choose it?

“Among the six specializations, I choose the Program Design and Evaluation as my track, which focuses on quantitative skills development and the design and evaluation of policies. From experiment design to cost-benefit analysis, this track covers the overall process of program design as well as evaluation. It is ideally tied to my interests and what I aim to work in.”

Amid your rigorous academic schedule, in what ways do you strike a work-life balance?
“In one sentence...work hard, play hard. It’s all about time management and making your time most efficient in class.”