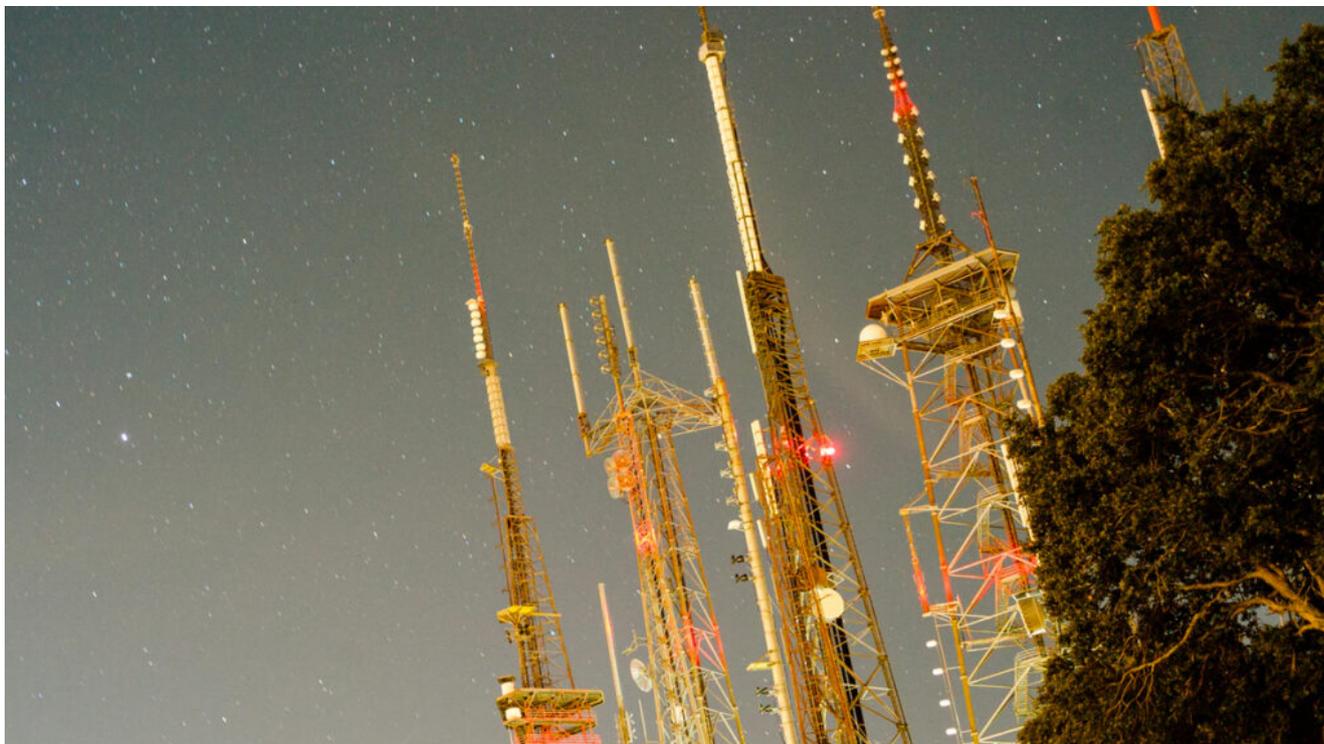


Yiru Zhou embraces the past and shapes the future of GPS



GPS's 2016 Outstanding Alumna details what it means to be honored by and why she is dedicated to giving back to her School

By Sarah Pfladderer | GPS News



Though she's no longer lugging books to class or spending countless hours in the library at the UC San Diego School of Global Policy and Strategy (GPS), Yiru Zhou '93, is closer to her alma mater than ever.

A member of the GPS's International Advisory Board and co-chair of the advisory council for the School's [21st Century China Program](#), Zhou, who is vice president of China operations for Qualcomm Technology Licensing, notes these commitments as a mere and natural progression of going from a student to an

alumna of GPS.

“Alumni stay connected with the School because we care about the School,” she explained. “We make up part of its past, but we also can shape its future.”

And for Zhou, her efforts to do just that haven’t gone unnoticed. She is GPS’s 2016 Outstanding Alumna.

“Yiru Zhou embodies the goals of the School for our students and alumni,” GPS Dean [Peter Cowhey](#) commended. “She believes in service to the School and to the larger public good of U.S.-China relations. This mix of skills and priorities makes her a wonderful example for the GPS students of every generation.”

Zhou’s dedication to U.S.-China relations took professional shape immediately after graduating 23 years ago, when she joined Qualcomm Inc. in sales.

It was a time when the wireless telecommunications industry was in the thick of change, transforming from analog to digital standards, Zhou recalls, noting she was recruited to Qualcomm’s code-division multiple access (CDMA) team to develop business and make CDMA one of the digital communications standards in China.

“Prior to joining Qualcomm, I had very little knowledge on telecommunications,” Zhou said. “In the past 20 plus years, I have been fortunate to be part of the wireless industry that constantly innovates to improve our lives. ... As I grew within the corporate world, I had more financial and management responsibilities, but my focus has always been on the customers who buy products or services from us.”

After six years at Qualcomm, Zhou accepted a position at Ericsson, where she rose to oversee the company’s contract with China Mobile Ltd., which is among the largest telecommunications equipment accounts in the world.

More than a decade later, she returned to Qualcomm and her San Diego roots. As vice president of China operations for Qualcomm Technology Licensing, she now is responsible for managing Qualcomm’s relationships with technology licensees in China, primarily original equipment manufacturers of smart phone devices.

“I have lived in many places but consider San Diego home,” Zhou explained. “I

love this city. I think it's the combination of the good weather, good friends, good connection with GPS, good employment and the fond memories growing up here."



As part of her co-chairmanship of the advisory council for the 21st Century China Program, Zhou has been able to make new memories at the School. Foremost, she has been instrumental in gaining support for the program at Qualcomm, across San Diego and beyond.

"Yiru's devotion to our School and her strategic vision have been crucial ingredients for the success of the 21st Century China Program we have been building over the past four years," said Professor [Susan Shirk](#), who nominated Zhou for GPS's 2016 Outstanding Alumna. "As Yiru's former professor, I am proud of her career achievements and grateful for the chance to work closely with her."

Zhou shared similar sentiments toward Shirk, recognizing her not only as a mentor but a role model.

"Susan taught her students to see the big picture and put daily business challenges in the context of a big political environment," Zhou said. "I have done well in the corporate world in a way because I always see the big picture, and my training at GPS has something to do with it."

[Register](#) to attend GPS's Salsa Saturday celebration on June 4, as part of UC San Diego's Alumni Weekend, when Zhou will be recognized as GPS's 2016 Outstanding Alumna.

An alumni selection committee reviewed nominations for and determined the winner of the 2016 Outstanding Alumna or Alumnus. Thank you to the following alumni who represent the alumni board, different regions as well as different degree programs:

- Gary Bremermann, MPIA '91, Tokyo
- John Edwards, MAS-IA '15, San Diego
- Natasha Hanshaw, MPIA '10, Zurich
- Liliana Pao, MPIA '02, Brussels
- Heather Rock, MPIA '06, Houston
- Duc Tran, BA/MIA '12, Washington, D.C.