

My name is Gloria Wu and I graduated from UCSD in 2012 with a double major in Biochemistry and Cellular Biology, and Japanese Studies.

Being a through and through science major, I first started taking Japanese language courses to fulfill Revelle College's then Area of Focus requirements (three courses in an area unrelated to my major and focused in one department or subject area). Nishimura-sensei's humor, art and endless patience made me want to pursue learning the language and culture. After two quarters of first year Japanese, I was hooked and began looking into study abroad opportunities.

In summer of 2009, I participated in the UCEAP program abroad at Tsuru University in Yamanashi Prefecture, Japan. The program at Tsuru is an immersion program that focuses on Japanese society and culture. The intimate campus size not only allowed me to focus on my Japanese language skills but also explore campus life and student clubs. Even though I was only in Tsuru for half a year, it was an unforgettable experience. Upon returning to the US, I declared Japanese Studies as my second major.

After graduating from UCSD, my career took me down a different path compared to many of my JET-bound classmates. I studied pharmacy at the USC School of Pharmacy and in 2016 received my Doctor of Pharmacy. Recently, I completed my pharmacy residency here in San Diego and currently work as an inpatient pharmacist for Scripps Health. Even though I don't use Japanese in my day-to-day workflow, I believe Japanese Studies has greatly contributed to my career.

My time with the Japanese Studies department and experiences abroad have made me a well-rounded individual. Third year and fourth year Japanese developed my communication and presentation skills. Other memorable classes such as Japan 190 and Ghosts in Japan cultivated analytical and critical thinking. All of these skills are applicable to my job and have made me successful regardless of whether I am counseling a patient or presenting to the Pharmacy and Therapeutics Committee. There have been unexpected advantages as well. The addition of my Japanese Studies major to my CV has also been a great conversation starter and has made me stand out as a candidate for pharmacy school, residency and job.

It is often too easy to think linearly in regards to our careers. We take mammalian physiology now so that we can apply for medical school to become that surgeon. While that may be true in some regards, I challenge you to look beyond your major. Find that area of focus that asks you think in ways you've never thought before. I credit much of who I am today to my professors in the Japanese Studies department and to the friendships I along the way. I believe the Japanese Studies Department has much to offer, and you will not find another group of people more invested in the success of their students.