

Jeremy Wan

My name is Jeremy Wan, and I graduated in Summer 2019 as a Japanese Studies and NanoEngineering double major. I am currently still at UCSD for my master's degree in Chemical Engineering. Before coming to UCSD as an undeclared freshman, I studied Japanese at a Japanese language school in Tokyo for several months. Not wanting to forget what I had learned, I decided to enroll in a Japanese course and placed into the JAPN 140 series. At the time, I had no intention of picking up a secondary major, and considering the lack of overlap between the curricula, Japanese Studies would not even have been my first choice for a second degree.

I carried this perspective through the JAPN 140 and 150 series, where Mochizuki-sensei, Tokuda-sensei, and Tohsaku-sensei kept me keenly motivated on improving my language skills as well as my cultural knowledge, until I was presented with two extraordinary opportunities: one to work as a research assistant here at UCSD under a Japanese visiting scholar studying polymer chemistry, and a second in the form of a summer research internship at the University of Tokyo studying polymeric adhesive materials. My linguistic proficiency gave me a major advantage in communication, equipping me to translate for my peers, while my cultural familiarity allowed me to adapt quickly to the Japanese work environment, allowing me to better connect with my colleagues. I was thoroughly amazed at how well the teachings from the Japanese courses applied to such a unique intersection between traditional science and Japanese culture.

I declared my secondary major in the late into my third year. However, having already taken various relevant courses out of interest, I was still able to smoothly plan out and complete the remainder of the major requirements by early into my senior year, even before I had completed my primary degree. After graduating from this master's program, I intend to pursue industry relating to polymer engineering. Coincidentally, Japan is a global leader in this field, and I expect that my experiences and connections gained through Japanese Studies will continue to provide exciting challenges and opportunities to guide my future endeavors.