

Personal Statement

One of my goals in graduate school is to further my pursuit of advancing equal access to educational resources for students in marginalized groups.

Equal Access in STEM. Besides mentoring young women in STEM throughout my undergraduate time, for the past year, I worked on the University of British Columbia (UBC) Computer Science (CS) Undergraduate Program Evaluation and Renewal project. In the process, I realized how my experience with data visualization and user interface design could help to improve equity in education. Degree planning is challenging and time-consuming since students have to envision their career path and go to individual course pages to ensure they meet prerequisites accordingly. First-generation college students are especially vulnerable as they lack adequate guidance from their immediate support system. To solve this problem, I designed an interactive directed graph to show the dependencies between courses, provide a holistic view of the CS program, and visualize potential academic trajectories at UBC CS. I was thrilled to present my work at the UBC Board of Governors Meeting in Spring 2020. I deployed the graphs to the UBC CS website in Summer 2020 and am currently helping UBC Centre for Teaching, Learning and Technology adapt the graphs campus-wide. Participating in this project allowed me to advance equal access in a higher level of education and help as many students thrive as possible.

Where I See Myself. As a first-generation college student from a low-income, single-parent family, working puts additional constraints on my course load yet is the most effective way to support myself. Although I spent six years on my undergraduate degree, I did two years of co-op at three different places in industry, non-profit, and academia. While studying full-time, I have also worked part-time in retail, administration, and teaching. Through these valuable experiences, I not only learned about the many real-world challenges that people face on the job, but also discovered research interests that would allow me to address some of those challenges. After graduate studies, I aim to pursue a career in academia, so that I can develop the research and tools to address these challenges and more. Furthering my education at Berkeley would bring me one step closer to my goal of advancing data-driven decision-making in a wide range of fields and improving equal access to educational resources for students like me in marginalized groups.