

Student Profile: Scyler Li

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Students in the WIMU program come from not just Washington, Idaho, Montana, and Utah, but across the country and world. Scyler Li's journey to becoming a veterinarian began in China, and it's continued through Singapore, Seattle, and now Utah State University's School of Veterinary Medicine in Logan.

While studying abroad comes with challenges, it also offers opportunities. And no matter where Li goes, she's always ready for new experiences.

You moved from China to Singapore at age 14, and you later volunteered at the Singapore Zoo for 5 years. How did that experience shape your interest in animals and veterinary medicine?

Scyler Li: Volunteering at the Singapore Zoo raised my awareness of environmental conservation and my interest in animal care. Because of that, I started working with nonhuman primates during my freshman year at the University of Washington and volunteered at the Center for One Health Research.

Through those experiences, I saw the different sides of primate medicine and was really fascinated by it. Lab animal medicine combines two of my passions — research and clinical medical care — and it's really challenging.

Speaking of the University of Washington, you studied environmental health and philosophy while in undergrad. How did that experience affect your view of veterinary medicine?

SL: Studying environmental health helped me understand population health and appreciate animal research. Studying philosophy allowed me to understand my passion and think about the ethics of animal welfare and what exactly I want to achieve as an aspiring veterinarian.

On top of vet school, you also figure skate competitively. How do you find time for such a challenging sport? What makes it worth it?

SL: When I'm at the rink, I forget about everything else. I skate with friends to de-stress, and working out just feels good after sitting in a chair for a long time.

Skating is also a great way to meet new people that I wouldn't have otherwise met in vet school. I compete for the collegiate skating team at USU, and this year, we traveled twice to Colorado for inter-collegiate competitions. We had a great time bonding as a team and making friends with skaters from across the West Coast.

What do you enjoy most about the School of Veterinary Medicine?

SL: The small class size is really nice for me. Being able to bond to every single one of my classmates and have such a supportive group of highly motivated people is great, and we also do things outside of school together. The small class size also allows us to get to know our professors really well.

What challenges have you faced as an international student? What advice would you offer to another student in your position?

SL: The way veterinary medicine is practiced is very different from one country to another. I've shadowed veterinarians in both the United States and China, and seeing the different approaches definitely helped me appreciate the standard of care patients receive and made me think about what my expectations will be after I graduate.

As for advice, take advantage of opportunities and use that diversity of experience to your advantage! Your knowledge may bring new ideas to veterinary care in your future workplace.