



Liew Qi

Pursuing a Bachelor of Science in Molecular Environmental Biology with a concentration in Ecology at the University of California, Berkeley.

“photo taken on the top of Half Dome at Yosemite”

When I was six, I told everybody that I wanted to be a park ranger, zookeeper, or simply famous. Twelve years later, I was completing my JC studies and was overwhelmed with other students' dreams and aspirations. This prompted me to start doing some soul searching to figure out what I truly liked. In school, my favourite classes were the ones where we were outdoors, and for recreation I enjoyed going to a nearby park to cycle. I enjoyed watching Animal Planet and I always took several photographs of interesting flora and fauna ever since I got a camera. It seemed then that the most obvious choice would be a study in this field.

The National Parks Board was the perfect opportunity to further my interests. My future job scope has a nice balance between outdoors and indoors, and the work environment – well who wouldn't want to be surrounded by greenery? After having a week long attachment with different branches, I was so intrigued that I requested for another one; there were so many things to learn and see about Singapore's green spaces and I couldn't get enough of it.

As a student in Berkeley, the opportunities are endless. I enrolled in a special field studies course in Biology and am currently conducting field research on bird behavior with relation to plants in Golden Gate Park. Watching hummingbird displays with the Golden Gate Bridge as a backdrop and listening to song sparrows – amazing! I also intern at the Richmond Field Station where I help out with the restoration of a marshland by planting, weeding and mulching native marsh plants. It is back-breaking work, but I had the satisfaction of watching my new plants grow, as well as the adrenaline rush of using a pick to hack the ground. For my breadth class requirements, I took introduction courses in Archaeology and Astronomy. Examining artifacts and having 3am labs counting shooting stars while lying on the grass are experiences I will never forget.

Aside from having all these interesting classes, Berkeley is also a campus with interesting people. It is easy to find friends who have the same interests as you. At the end of the semester, my classmates in Biology field studies will be organizing a camping trip as well as a birdwatching trail. In addition, I joined one of Berkeley's dance groups and the Cal Women's Squash Team and met others who were also interested in dance and sports.

The amazing thing about studying in Berkeley and having the NParks Scholarship is that I am doing what I like and knowing that what I study now will be relevant to my future job. Another bonus is the knowledge that one day I would be able to continue maintaining Singapore's green spaces for future generations to enjoy. If you truly enjoy nature and would like to make a difference to Singapore's landscape, then the National Parks Board Scholarship is for you.