

Rowland Heights

Walnut student gets Phi Kappa Phi graduate fellowship

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David Wang of Walnut is one of only 57 students in the nation to receive the prestigious \$5,000 Phi Kappa Phi Graduate Fellowship.

The 19-year-old received a bachelor's degree in biochemistry this spring from Cal State L.A. Wang will pursue a doctorate at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology / Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution next fall.

The dean's list student is a member of Phi Kappa Phi, the oldest and largest national honor society promoting academic excellence in higher education.

"Congratulations for this well-deserved honor and recognition of your accomplishments academically and contributions to the community," said Alfredo Gonzalez, dean of Undergraduate Studies at Cal State L.A.

"David is an outstanding candidate for receipt of a Phi Kappa Phi fellowship," said chemistry professor Scott Nickolaisen. "He shows remarkable ability to understand complex concepts. ... Of all the students I have known in my role as a professor and adviser at CSULA, I would place David as one of the top five in terms of his intellectual ability and academic performance."

Wang is also a recipient of the 2008 Student of the Year and Honors Scholarship presented by the University's G.E. Honors Program, and the CSULA Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry's 2011 Katherine Carter Award in Scientific Writing.

The Walnut teen took advantage of the university's Early Entrance Program to start college at the age of 15. The program admits gifted youngsters as young as 11 directly into college. It provides evaluation and counseling sessions, as well as the opportunity to study with like-minded peers.

"One of the best aspects of this program is the support the students receive. EEPsters benefit not only from the advice of a very dedicated staff, but also from the wonderful professors, diverse campus and peer interaction fostered by the program," Wang explained.

"The faculty are extraordinarily committed to their students, and the guidance provided by my professors has been invaluable during my time at CSULA," he added. "In particular, Dr. Ellis has been a fantastic mentor and research adviser, and it was under his tutelage that I became interested in exploring the links between chemistry, biology and the Earth sciences."

Wang was vice president of the EEP student government and a member of the Student Affairs Subcommittee in the College of Natural and Social Sciences. He has also been actively involved with the University's Associated Students Inc. and the CSULA Amnesty International.

The young man has volunteered as an event supervisor for the L.A. County Science Olympiad since 2008.

Additionally, he works as a research assistant in Professor Andre Ellis's geology lab at CSULA, leading a team in developing stable isotopes as tracers of chromium contamination in groundwater. He also conducted research on drug resistance in ovarian tumors with the Dorigo group at UCLA as a volunteer in the summers of 2008 and 2009, and as an Amgen Scholar in the summer of 2010.

According to Ellis, "David is more than ready to take on a career at the forefront of academic research. His intellectual ability is second to none and he has been able to understand advanced concepts in isotope geochemistry with ease. I have no doubt that he will be competitive at any level and make unique contributions to the field."

- *Cal State Los Angeles*

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