Courtney Gibbons
UCLA Fast Track Student of the Month

Birthplace: Stanford, CA
Hometown: Los Altos, CA
High School: Los Altos High School
Siblings: Christopher Gibbons (MBA student at Seattle University)
Interests: rocketry, data analytics, photography, hiking, and video games

Why did you choose to major in Electrical Engineering?
I chose to major in Electrical Engineering after working as a data analyst for three summers at Wrap.co. Wrap.co is a startup that invented a software platform to create multimedia ebooks called Wraps. Wraps have been adopted by companies like Verizon, Nike, and Salesforce. Working as a data analyst, I discovered how data can drive better decision-making. I analyzed data on user interaction to identify optimal design, created a best-practice guide, and presented my findings to company executives and customers. By following my recommendations, customers saw a significant improvement in key performance indicators!

Why did you choose to attend UCLA?
I chose UCLA because of the community. At a top-notch school, you’d expect a highly competitive environment. However, I had heard that UCLA is actually incredibly collaborative, and I have to agree. Students are always organizing class-wide Kahoots to prepare for midterms and sharing good practice problems to do before the final. Instead of competing with each other, we are working together so that we all learn.

How are you involved at UCLA?
I’m currently in IEEE Open Project Space, which is a year-long collection of projects to introduce new EE majors to programming microcontrollers, communication, motor control, and more. I’m also in Ohm SwEEt Ohm, an IEEE General Board. We do
technical projects, officer shadowing, and socials.

During fall quarter, I participated in Rocket Project RISE and designed a low power and a high power rocket!

RISE prepared me to join our hybrid rocket competition team, Prometheus. I’m currently on the Air Systems subteam, and we send GPS, altimeter, and IMU data to mission control via radio so we have the data to successfully recover our rocket and improve our rockets each year.

I’ve also been attending IEEE WATT and SWE workshops throughout the year, and I’m a part of the GryffINDUCTOR house for HogWATTs!

Have you done any projects?

I did a class project in December that uses machine learning to make sure the user leaves the house safely during the pandemic. C code for embedded ML on the STM32 SensorTile, an IoT module with a microcontroller, tracks if the user washed their hands, put on their mask, and picked up their phone before leaving the house. The system warns the user if they open the door to leave without completing these activities.

In January, I will be doing a Raspberry Pi Facial Recognition project through IEEE WATT, and I will be participating in the IDEA Hacks Hardware Hackathon!

What is your favorite part of the Fast Track program?

I know it’s cheesy to say this again, but the community is my favorite part! I have made so many amazing friends through Fast Track. We often do game nights and play Minecraft or Valorant together.

What are your educational and career plans?

I’m excited to do research this summer, and I hope to participate in the 4+1 program to get my M.S. in Electrical Engineering at UCLA in 5 years. I’m not sure which industry I want to go into after I graduate, but the Electrical Engineering seminar I took fall quarter showed me how versatile a degree in Electrical Engineering is. I could continue working in data analytics or I could apply what I’m learning in Rocket Project to the aerospace industry.