

My name is Derek Xiao, I'm attending UCLA as a first-year Electrical Engineering major. I first became interested in Physics by watching Walter Lewin's lectures on MIT OCW in my sophomore year in High School, I quickly made the decision to Physics Olympiad in my junior year, for which I learned much of first year Classical Mechanics and Electricity and Magnetism. I decided to join Science Olympiad in my senior year, and won first place at the California State Science Olympiad in the events Material Science, Wind Power, and a Bronze in Fermi Questions. Fermi Questions was great fun, as it drew upon everything I knew about all the fields of science, as well as some sharp intuition to do well. Material Science in particular piqued some of my interest in the research done in the CNSI lab at UCLA.

I chose to double major in EE and Physics because I wanted some practical side to my education at UCLA, as opposed to purely theoretical physics. EE seemed like the field for me, as it spans many of the STEM disciplines, i.e. math for control theory, physics for solid state, and whatever circuits is.

I plan to go to grad school for a PhD. My main goal in undergrad is two fold. First, get a solid grounding in all the fundamental physics and EE classes in order to make it easier for me to move among fields later on; second, figure out what I want to pursue a PhD in.