

Josiah Chang

UCLA Fast Track Electrical Engineering

Birthplace: Woodland Hills
Schooling: Del Norte High School
Hobbies: Drawing
Siblings: Twin sister and older sister



When did you know you wanted to be an electrical engineer?

I've always wanted to be an engineer because of my dad. He's an engineer, and he could always handle a ton of problems around the house, whether it'd be something small like a clogged drain or replacing our entire water boiler. The amazing part was that half the time he told me he had no experience in what he was doing and simply said "I just kinda figure it out. You can find anything on the internet now." Around high school, I started thinking about what he said and realized that what I truly looked up to in my dad was the mindset of an engineer. Just the ability to look at any problem, break it down, and solve it piece by piece, was something absolutely amazing to me. To be honest, I wasn't even sure about going into ECE particularly and joined because that was my dad's field in college. And to be even more honest, I think it has been an incredibly challenging field even though it's my first year. However, I think I've seen the incredible applications of electrical engineering and have only been encouraged by this fact to explore the field more and more.

Why did you choose UCLA?

I chose UCLA's ECE program because I was incredibly interested in the UCLA Fast Track program. It seemed like the total package; higher access to counselors and facilities, closer relationship with a certain group of other electrical engineers, and greater chance to enroll in honors classes and certain internships. On top of that, UCLA appealed to me in general because I thought I would have the opportunity to meet a lot of great people due to the large class size.

Who has influenced you the most in your choice of your academic field?

I think it's been my family. Not only has my dad shaped my desire to be an engineer, but the rest of my family has always been very supportive. My sister is always incredibly encouraging to me in really getting me passionate about the field that I study. My mom's always asking me if I'm looking into any kind of research and even though it can get annoying (I hope she doesn't read this), I really appreciate it. They always make sure that I'm really choosing the field that I like the most and can contribute the most in. I'm truly grateful to have their support and love.



How has it been, being on a "big" campus so far?

It's definitely been a lot different from high school. I knew UCLA was big but I never understood how big it actually was until I started taking classes. I've definitely complained about being at too big of a campus sometimes because the

walk between classes can be pretty long. I definitely think it's refreshing though because I see almost entirely different people every time I walk to and from campus. I've met so many incredible people and can only imagine how many others there are on campus that I don't even know about. It's also been really fun exploring the campus in general, I felt like I discovered a new cool place almost every week for the first quarter.



How was your experience with SURP?

Even though it turned out to be remote, I actually really liked my experience in SURP. I didn't get to work in a physical lab, but I still gained a great experience in interacting with my professor and postgraduate that helped me understand the messy but exciting side of research. Going in, I was honestly completely lost with how to work on my project, which dealt with quantum machine learning. It was definitely a challenge to understand the material and keep up with some of the

deadlines, but my professor and fellow SURP partner really helped me through it, and I'm grateful for them. It was also really cool to see everyone else's projects since they were so diverse despite being all related to electrical engineering still. The biggest thing I realized was that a lot of research probably involved dealing with the unknown, so I definitely feel more ready and excited to study research.

What's your favorite aspect of the Fast Track program?

I think my favorite aspect of Fast Track is just having the opportunity to get close with a small group of electrical engineering majors. Not only does everyone seem super smart and ambitious, but they're great people too. Although I haven't been connected with everyone, I've definitely met some amazing friends that I'm really grateful. The opportunity to take challenging classes, apply for internships, and push each other to do even better together is great, and I hope that I'll continue to take advantage of this aspect despite the pandemic.

What are you interested in as a career?

So far I'm really interested in interdisciplinary research and development with electrical engineering. I've been looking into some electrical approaches to biological research, but have recently become interested in something involving advancing cell drawn animation. Since I love to draw, I would really like to find a field in electrical engineering that advances the drawing and animation industry.

