



## UC San Diego Chancellor's Scholars Program

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*Ruth M. Covell, MD Study Abroad Scholarship Endowment*



### **KEENE CHEUNG**

Major: ICAM Music

Cohort Year: 2022

Plans to study abroad in France 2023-2024

I am currently an ICAM (Interdisciplinary Computing and the Arts) Music major, working to declare a double major in Business Economics as well. I am interested in studying abroad in Paris, specifically in the Jazz in Paris Global Seminar that UCSD offers in the summer. One of the main reasons I wish to pursue this opportunity is to broaden my perspective and knowledge of music. Coming into college pursuing music has been quite an uphill battle for me over the years. Many Asian households have an unspoken expectation for children to get degrees in the STEM field specifically engineering or medical sciences to get money. However, as an avid enjoyer of the arts, I found it very difficult to convince my family to let me pursue this as a career.

Music has always been a part of my life starting since I learned to play the piano at the age of 5. As the years went on, I picked up the flute starting in middle school and continued to perform for both instruments throughout high school. It was my sophomore year of high school when I realized that I truly loved the performing arts, especially playing the flute. However, due to the many struggles that my family went through, I realized that I would need to work in both STEM and the arts to be able to pursue what I enjoy with their approval and support. Ever since I was three, my parents have been divorced which has led to many personal struggles relating to my relationship with my parents and finances. In addition to the various custody trials that took a toll on my mental health over the years, I would have to switch houses every single day which became very inconvenient for me and my studies. My mother also has not had a job in the 18 years that I've lived under the excuse of needing to raise me. However, her being a single mother meant that we lived off of very little, often without wifi even during the pandemic which heavily encumbered my studies.

Despite these struggles, I learned how to persevere and work past them to get to where I am now in college, finally pursuing the arts and how technology applies to and enhances the world of music through the ICAM major while keeping up my practices in a total of five instruments. I love music for how universal it is in all different forms of media and communication. Most of my upbringing has been in the realm of classical music. However, attending UCSD has given me new perspectives on the various types of art and music out in the world and has inspired me to go out and explore the different possibilities out there. This is why when I saw the Jazz in Paris Global Seminar, I realized that this could be a perfect opportunity to explore one of the primary sites of jazz music.

