#IamUCI – Phoebe Roach

B.S., Earth system science and minor in public health
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Class of 2024 graduate Phoebe Roach, B.S., Earth system science and minor in public health.

Picture Credit:
Steve Zylius/UC Irvine

First-generation college student Phoebe Roach has always known that she wanted to work with the environment, but upon entering UC Irvine as an environmental engineering major, she found that engineering was not as fulfilling as she had hoped.

With the help of a track teammate, Roach realized that Earth system science was her true passion.

“It’s just so broad,” she says. “There are so many different things you can do with an ESS degree. I feel like I learn a little bit of everything in the physical sciences, so I really enjoy that part of it.”

Currently, Roach is a bee/tree intern through UC Irvine’s Sustainability Resource Center – planning and coordinating educational events about pollinators, native species, trees and their roles in the campus ecosystem.

She’s also conducting research for Cosmos, a UC-wide program that teaches STEM subjects to high school students. Roach charts socioeconomic changes in high schools to help lower-income students get into the program.

In addition, she spent three years on UC Irvine’s track team as a pole vaulter and is now the director of operations for UCI Track & Field.

After graduation, Roach hopes to work somewhere along the West Coast, mapping shifts in the environment and site testing for environmental firms.

What was your favorite class at UC Irvine?

I took a geographical information system course under Elizabeth Crook [associate professor of teaching in Earth system science]. We learned how to use ArcGIS Pro, a mapping software. The project I did for the class was to compare the Environmental Protection Agency ecoregions in Arizona with Native American reservation boundaries. I was trying to see whether the U.S. government gave Native Americans usable land. The answer is no, and I found actual data to prove it.

What advice would you give to your first-year self?

I’d probably say it’s OK to relax. Change was a scary thing for me, and I wish I’d realized that I wanted to do ESS sooner than I did. But it’s OK to go with the flow every once in a while. I’ve learned that you can relax and still take school seriously.

> *“Throughout her time at UCI, Phoebe has successfully balanced rigorous coursework in ESS/public health and a demanding pole-*

> *vaulting practice/competition schedule with grace. I've consistently been impressed with Phoebe's diligent work ethic, motivation for self-improvement, openness to adapt to new challenges and positive presence. I look forward to seeing her grow as an environmental professional."*
>
> *– Nicole Larson, Master of Urban and Regional Planning student*

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