#IamPhysSci: Houston, Amber Wong has liftoff

Wong, who’s receiving her Bachelor of Science in physics, will be working toward her a Master of Science in astronautical engineering at USC.

Monday, June 09, 2025

Lucas Van Wyk Joel
UC Irvine School of Physical Sciences



Amber Wong, Bachelor of Science in Physics & Astronomy

Picture Credit:
Lucas Van Wyk Joel / UC Irvine

SoPS: First off, tell us your name, major and where you’re from.

Wong: My name is Amber Wong, and I'm a physics major with a concentration in astrophysics, and I'm from Lancaster, California, out in the desert.

SoPS: What was it about UCI that made you decide it was the best place for your studies?

Wong: I picked UCI because it has a perfect combination of all of the things I wanted in a school. It was close to home, had really good food places, it's safe, and it had the programs I was interested in. At the time I thought I was gonna be a chemical engineer, but they also had other options I was interested in just in case I decided that wasn't the thing I wanted to do. And that's what happened: I switched to physics and astrophysics, which I knew from the start was something I may want to study.

SoPS: Looking back at your time at UCI, what achievement are you most proud of?

Wong: I've been a peer academic advisor for the School of Physical Sciences for years, and the job has had a huge impact on my time here. I've really loved getting to help other students find their paths and helping them make sure they're on the right track. It makes me feel good, advising and mentoring other people. I was also a Resonance mentor for Physics 99, where I helped the transfer and freshman physics students integrate into UCI life and get started in the course. I also became the event coordinator for the Society of Physics Students, and I loved that position because I got to create collaborative spaces where people can make friends, help each other out, and get the support they need in physics. I really enjoyed that. Being a part of these things has shown me what I really value in life and what I aspire to find in my future job as well.

SoPS: Can you share a standout moment or experience at UCI that has really shaped your personal growth or career goals?

Wong: Just the time that I've spent here with the people that I've spent it with has helped me decide what's really important to me, both personally and career-wise. Also, a big shout-out to my faculty mentor, Professor Paul Robertson in Physics & Astronomy. He's been a great research mentor, and he's always helped me through different challenges. He's always been super supportive in helping me through not only research, but also job interviews and internship interviews, and also just life in general. Being in his research group has shown me what a good and supportive work

environment is like.

SoPS: As graduation approaches, what are your immediate and longer-term plans for the future?

Wong: Immediately, over summer, I plan on doing nothing. I need the break. But after that I'll be going to USC's astronautical engineering master's program, which is very exciting. Later on, I envision myself in a career working in some company, hopefully in Southern California, ideally in the space and aerospace industries. I learned through UCI that research, while very interesting, is not for me, and that's OK. It's not for everybody. But it has helped me find what is for me, which will probably be going into industry.

SoPS: Anything else you want to share about your time at UCI?

Wong: I just love UCI. I wish I didn't have to leave. I love Irvine. I love the people I've met here. The weather. The buildings. The classes I've taken. The people I've met. Everything's been so great.

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