

[Interviewer] So, if you want to introduce yourself...

[Laura] My name is Laura sun. I'm currently a second year master student in management, science engineering at Stanford graduating in June. I focus on, um, technology and engineering management with a specific focus on entrepreneurship.

[Interviewer] Great...First question is, can you tell me a bit about your background, such as where did you grow up?

[Laura] Yeah, um, I grew up in China in the U S and my dad is an engineer, so I definitely got that family influence. Um, so I always wanted to study engineering and I did my bachelor's degree in engineering at Cornell. And then I also work in the engineering and design firms and consulting before coming to Stanford.

[Interviewer] So how did you become interested in engineering? I know you kind of mentioned a little bit.

[Laura] So, , growing up as a kid, I always love to build stuff and get my hands dirty. Yeah, I know. So, you know, obviously I saw my dad was working on engineering drawings, design optimization problems, when I was a little kid and I was like, yeah, that sounds really cool. And that I always wanted to be an engineer and I'm pretty good at math and science. And I was like, yeah, that's a perfect opportunity for me to apply what I learned from classrooms and really use those skills in real, in solving real world problems.

[Interviewer] Okay. So, the next question is, can you tell us a bit about your area of concentration, and I guess what interests you about it?

[Laura] Yeah. Um, I do love, you know, the broad kind of spectrum of what the MS&E major evolves. So, I decided to do the TEM track- technology engineering management, and more specifically, as I mentioned, more focused on, you know, entrepreneurship and, uh, analytics. So I did within this spectrum idea to, um, classes in data science, in policy management, pretty hardcore engineering, um, optimization, simulation classes. So all of these courses, as well as my experience in correcting was professor and coursework outside. Uh, we the concentration allow me to combine my interest in sort of in the intersection of, you know, analytics, management and entrepreneurship.

[Interviewer] So the next question is, and what are your career plans for after Stanford and how did you decide on them?

[Laura] Um, my career plan after Stanford...So, I joined Google as a program manager, and really, you know, this role really is aligned with my interest sort of, as I mentioned, the intersection of analytics, product, business, and engineering. I also have a background in consulting and throughout my Stanford career, I developed some, um, more technical skills in data science and machine learning and, you know, optimization analytics in general. So I'm really interested in applying those technical skills in a business

setting in a tech, large tech organization. Yeah. So I really believe that, you know, uh, with those skill sets and my, uh, the resources that I get from here, I would be able to kind of drive some large scale cross functional impact.

[Interviewer] Well, congratulations. So the next question is what most excites you about your future?

[Laura] Oh, there are many things that I really got really excited about. I think the key is really to continue growing myself and taking on new challenges. You know, now I'm sort of reflecting on my career at Stanford, right over the course of a year and half. I really, um, I've done a lot of kind of cross functional research and projects and interacting with faculty and students across many different schools, not just we see them and see, but also across different disciplines. And I really see, you know, I've challenged myself to innovate, um, to grow in the area that I may not be familiar with before. And so really the, the kind of, you know, what, what excites me is I can bring those skills. I learn from say like proud of managing large scale programs, um, you know, hardcore data science classes and how to use data to drive decision making, and really use those to tackle new challenges ahead of me. And another aspect I think is really kind of developing myself- personal development aspects. So I stand for, I took classes like organizational behavior and that taught me to understand the dynamics of interpersonal relations and how to develop myself as a leader and strengthen my management skills. So all of those, um, you know, I'm very excited to see how I can take those learnings into a new role in the future.

[Interviewer] Yeah. That sounds super exciting. So the next question is, okay, what advice do you have for future students and how can they make the best use of their time in MS&E at Stanford?

[Laura] Okay. Yeah, I think my number one advice is to challenge yourself, to innovate. Um, I would say, you know, my feeling about Stanford, as well as the Silicon Valley, it's sort of this innovation culture is part of the DNA of Stanford. Um, they're part of the DNA of the MS&E program. So I, you know, so I got really inspired by, the professors, the faculty members who, you know, I interacted with as we seen classroom and outside classroom, my peers, the students along, and everyone has been kind of pushing to, to grow, to innovate, um, and taking on new challenges. So I would definitely advise future students. You step out of your comfort zone and, you know, take advantage of all the amazing resources that Stanford and MS&E program offered and really, you know, build that connection and, and, and just get out of the classroom build stuff that you, you feel excited about that you think will make an impact, um, on the community, around you and really, you know, contribute and give back to that community. So I think even that, you know, bringing that learning from outside of the classroom and back to the classroom, and that will enrich a lot of your learning experience as well. So, yeah. So that's my top advice.

[Interviewer] So the last question is, um, what will you miss most about Stanford and the Bay area, but if you're saying barrier, then yeah...

[Laura] I'm staying in the Bay area, which I'm really excited about. Um, but that Stanford, I think just, uh, you know, the, the inhalation culture, um, and, uh, you know, continuing to kind of grow myself and continuing to explore that's something, Stanford has an Institute in me, the sort of the growth mindset, right? Like it's, it's always sort of something I miss a lot about, you know, um, really where I see, you know, a challenge I can, I know that I have the resources that the support that would get from Stanford from the program. And, um, another thing is really about, you know, the opportunities to conduct, um, kind of research in the intersection of sort of, you know, business policy engineering.

[Laura] I think that's a unique combination that the MS&E program offers. Um, so like for me, I have done research in sustainability finance. I've also, I'm quite involved in human centered AI initiatives. And then in the past I have taken the launchpad and then actually worked on my own entrepreneurial project and also sort of, um, right now started working on, um, COVID-19 innovation lab as part of the broader Stanford initiative. So there are just so many things that I can tap into and really, um, get access to, to those resources and really develop myself in those areas. So I really missed, um, and plus the campus is just beautiful and I miss, uh, you know, just taking a walk and chatting with people, um, on campus. That's something that I always cherish.

[Interviewer] I think that concludes the questions unless you have anything else to add?

[Laura] Um, no, I think that's, uh, that's pretty much it. I just want to say that I am so grateful for like, you know Linda, you're obviously you helped me a lot when I was sort of navigating my career paths and thinking about where I can best use my time when I first joined. Cause I do feel like, uh, you know, I joined actually a quarter later than the original schedule. I defaulted by a quarter and then I was feeling like I have to catch up. I have to sort of, you know, like trying to figure out how I can do this, uh, limited time that I have here. I would say Lori, you and everyone, you know, from the MS&E program just having, you know, have given me so much support as well as you know, I'm so grateful for my advisor professor.

[Laura] Professor Kathy Eisenhardt, so she has been amazing in offering advice. And also I took her classes at, um, technology strategy and technology based company, which essentially, you know, helped me decide on my career path as well. It's just one of the best classes I can ever taken. So I'm just saying that I wish I could have more time to feed back to the MS&E community. I know I would be able to do that after my graduation, but I really want to say it, you know, I've been so privileged to use these resources and get access to them. I'm just trying to figure out a way I can give back. And if I have more time, you know, I'm happy to chat with future students, et cetera. I just feel like that's part of me and really trying to give back to the community that served me.

[Interviewer] Aww, thank you.