

## What BΘO alumni say

Emi Matsuura, VP of Operations, interviews former Chapter Vice-president **Grace Cruz**. Grace graduated from U.C., Berkeley. As a Chapter officer, Grace won the Regional Scholar Award and was a member of the All-California Academic Team.

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**Emi:** Why did you participate in Beta Theta Omicron?

**Grace:** The idea of an international honor society that was not solely based on academic achievement sparked my interest. There were a number of activities on campus that were spearheaded or jointly organized by Beta Theta Omicron, such as the AIDS walk, food pantry, and breast cancer walk that I was interested in participating in. The chapter gave me an avenue to explore these activities, which I ended up really enjoying—for the most part, because of the friendships that I forged during these events.

**Emi:** Do you think the experience of Phi Theta Kappa helped you in your major or in transferring?

**Grace:** Very much so. Having come from the Philippines, I did not have much extracurricular activities going into college. Because of ΦΘΚ, my transfer/major application to UC Berkeley became pretty robust. The scholarships, awards, and membership in ΦΘΚ really helped make the transfer process so much easier. Not only did my experience in ΦΘΚ help with my transfer to Cal, but it also strengthened my resume, which I am now benefiting from, working in the industry.

**Emi:** What did you gain through your experience as an officer of Beta Theta Omicron Chapter? And what is most valuable?

**Grace:** Being that the four Hallmarks of ΦΘΚ are scholarship, fellowship, leadership, and Service I always like to think of my ΦΘΚ experience in terms of these Hallmarks. As an officer, I got the opportunity to work with people not only from our chapter but from the other local chapters and regions as well. The friendships that I made with these people have truly made a difference in my life. My leadership certainly emerged and became one of my strongest suits, even now in my career. Getting the chance to serve different groups of people, be it through fundraisers for different diseases, or mentoring children after school was very rewarding. ΦΘΚ gave me the chance to be able to give back to my community and I think that this was the most rewarding experience of all.

**Emi:** Did membership in ΦΘΚ make any difference when you applied for jobs?

**Grace:** Certainly. Membership in ΦΘΚ is one of the first things that I share when people ask me about some of the things that I have been proud of. Interviewers are certainly intrigued with ΦΘΚ and when I share what the organization is about, a lot of people have told me that they also wish that they could've experienced what I did with the organization.

**Emi:** What has Beta Theta Omicron meant to you?

**Grace:** Personally, I think of BΘO as an extended family of mine. A lot of my friends at present have been friends that I met while in BΘO. It has been a huge influence in where I am now in my life.