

What BΘO alumni say

Emi Matsuura, VP of Operations, interviews former Chapter Vice-president **Maria Segarra**. Maria has graduated from U.C., Santa Cruz with a baccalaureate in Psychology and is on her way to law school. As a Chapter officer, Maria was on the All-California Academic Team and won the Regional Essay Award. She also received the Pister Leadership Scholarship to UCSC.

Emi: Why did you participate in Beta Theta Omicron?

Maria: I participated in Beta Theta Omicron because I wanted to be more involved in activities and events on campus. When I took a closer look at the organizations on campus, Beta Theta Omicron seemed to be the perfect match for what I want – an intellectually stimulating environment, more opportunities to interact with like-minded peers, and a place where I can explore interests and career paths.

Emi: Do you think the experience of Phi Theta Kappa help you to get in your major?

Maria: While my experiences in Phi Theta Kappa did not directly influence what I wanted to major in, they were invaluable in strengthening my desire to choose a service-oriented career. The numerous service events that I led and facilitated exposed me to the needs of different communities and intensified my desire to effect positive change in other people's lives and to look after the welfare of the poorest and weakest members of society.

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

Maria: As an officer of the Beta Theta Omicron Chapter, I was fortunate to attend a number of Phi Theta Kappa events such as conventions, leadership conferences, and honors institutes, both at the regional and international level. Through these tours, I learned the importance of collaboration in achieving goals. I also realized that academic excellence and having fun in college need not be two distinct aspirations – that students can enjoy college life while striving to excel in classes. However, the most valuable insight I gained is knowing that differences in perspective does not necessarily imply division and that fostering a safe and respectful environment facilitates an honest and open discussion between individuals and groups.

Emi: Did membership in Phi Theta Kappa make any difference when you applied for jobs?

Maria: I do not know whether my affiliation with Phi Theta Kappa made any difference when I applied for jobs. However, the experiences I gained and the lessons learned made me more appealing as a potential employee. As a Phi Theta Kappa member, I participated in a number of events including conducting hands-on biology workshops for middle school students. These experiences helped developed job-related skills and improved my self confidence. Phi Theta Kappa lectures and events widened my perspective as I became more exposed to the complexities of social issues like health policy. Finally, as a Beta Theta Omicron officer and a full-time student who also worked part-time, my demanding schedule prompted me to be more efficient in managing my time and carrying out tasks.

Emi: What has Beta Theta Omicron meant to you?

Maria: To me, Beta Theta Omicron is where I realized my potential, where my abilities have been sharpened, my self-confidence boosted, my patience tested, and my commitment to service strengthened. It means camaraderie, fond memories, and advisors whose lives serve as shining examples of dedicated service. Needless to say, Beta Theta Omicron made a positive difference in my life.