

*How did Chinese women, after having their feet bound for many generations, finally discover they could run?*

This question (put forth by author Betty Friedan) is one which touches me deeply. In considering it, running becomes a metaphor for earning my MA in Economics at SFU, and I am reminded that knowledge is a source of ability and power. I realized this growing up in China, where women have historically been denied access to higher education. The oppression of women in China's patriarchy has been severe; there is still tremendous discrimination against women in the workplace and some parents continue to believe that education is not important for their daughters. I was fortunate to have the full support of my parents and the inspiration of female Chinese Vice Premier Wu Yi, who showed me that women in China can reach high in their dreams and succeed despite the odds. The desire to serve as such a model for the next generation of Chinese girls has motivated my desire to earn my MA in Economics—and of equal importance, I aim to contribute my knowledge as a businesswoman to my country in a meaningful way.

I have chosen to pursue a graduate degree in the field of Economics because it will provide me with the theoretical background, expertise in quantitative methods, and sophisticated means of analysis that I need to embark upon my career in business. When I began my studies at UBC I intended to earn a Bachelor of Business Administration, but my fascination with Economics grew as I came to understand that it not only looked at the larger forces at play on the world's economic stage, but also touched our daily lives in myriad ways. After transferring to SFU (due to its superior Business Administration program) I decided to acquire a joint major in Economics, and will graduate this June. Although I do not have an Honours degree, I believe that this joint major qualifies me as an excellent candidate for the program; I feel that the courses I have taken in Finance and Marketing will particularly strengthen my performance as a graduate student in Economics. Furthermore, I am currently taking ECON 403-3 and will take three additional 400-level ECON courses (to satisfy the Honours requirement) as an MA student.

My suitability as a candidate for the program is evident in the fact that I have received A- and A grades for all my upper level Economics courses and have a cumulative GPA of 3.5 for third and fourth year. Although my overall GPA is 3.3 and my average for lower division Economics courses is B, I do not consider these grades indicative of my academic ability. During my first few years as an undergraduate it was paramount for me to gain a mastery of English (my second language); this mastery is essential to my future success in today's internationally-oriented business environment. I was then able to concentrate exclusively on my studies and my grades subsequently reflected my commitment to academic excellence.

As my particular area of interest is labour economics, I would select the program's MA Project Option. This option would help me to achieve my goal of becoming an entrepreneur in China and establishing a company which is a model of efficiency, growth and fair employment policy; supporting and promoting the role of Chinese women in the workplace would be a specific goal. I consider the cross-cultural awareness and English skills I have gained in Canada to be vital to my success in this position, as I will invariably be required to deal with companies abroad.

I am very excited about the possibility of beginning my MA in Economics at SFU this September and continuing to work with the department's excellent faculty members. My decision to acquire knowledge in both business administration and economics was one which was reached carefully, and once my degree is achieved, I intend to go forth with it professionally as one who has integrity, enterprise, and vision.

