

Mengxing Chen

**Business Administration
Refugee Student Scholarship 2022-2023**



My Story:

I am Mengxing Chen and go by Sienna. I was born and raised in China. I grew up in a coastal city in southeastern China. Our village had its back to the mountains and its face to the sea. We are separated from Taiwan only by the Taiwan Strait. Many Taiwanese ancestors used to live in the city where I grew up.

As a child, I used to follow my family to the temple in the mountains to worship Buddha and to the fish pond to watch the adults catch fish.

When I graduated from high school at the age of 18, I came to the United States alone to work for three years, and then started my college career. I applied to four top

UC schools based on my major (Business Administration). I was honored to receive an offer from UCI. The Paul Merage School of Business at UCI is a dream come true for many people. It has a well-established and rich program where I can choose the subjects I want to focus on according to my preference and lay a good foundation for my future career planning. I have chosen marketing as my focus of study.

Before I came to UCI, I didn't know what marketing was. I thought it was all about sales, so marketing was not on my radar. It wasn't until I took a basic marketing class during my first quarter at UCI that I became interested in it. I started to find out that marketing includes many things, such as marketing analysis, branding, advertising design, data analysis, and so on. I was fascinated by its diversity, so I decided to focus on it. In the past six months, I have been looking for marketing-related internships. I submitted hundreds of resumes and finally received an offer as a Brand Marketing Specialist at Positive Masculinity two weeks after the summer started. I am currently interning at this non-profit organization where I am learning a lot about branding and social media marketing experiences. This has reinforced my desire to work in the marketing field in the future. Over the next year, I plan to continue taking marketing-related courses and getting involved in clubs.

Life at UCI has been wonderful and enjoyable, and I have met like-minded people during my study days. It is hard for me to find a favorite memory among all of them, so I can only give one example. This past winter, I was invited to a fellowship dinner for refugee scholarship recipients. It was my first time attending a networking event. I was surrounded by unfamiliar faces. After talking to some of the professionals, I found them to be very friendly and helpful. Instead of being superior, they cheered me from their seats as I received my award on stage. I was very touched at that moment because I never thought I would receive heartfelt blessings and compliments from strangers. I also realized that people who are really good are confident but not superior, they are good at heart and know how to be kind to others.

I've always been proud to be an anteater. First of all, it's an unattainable status for many people. Secondly, it is something I have earned with my own hard work and strength. I am thankful that I have not given up and kept on being the best I can be. What anteater has brought me is not only a halo but also a recognition of my past efforts. The days ahead are long and I hope I can continue to walk with confidence. I have one more year before I graduate, and I really want to stay at UCI for a few more years. I hope to work hard on my classes, make more friends with like-minded people, get involved in clubs, and go to the UCI gym to dance more often. I hope that I can gradually develop myself into a better leader.

Thank You:

I sincerely thank the donors for their donations to me. This is the second time I have received a scholarship. I was very excited and my family and friends were very proud of me when they found out about it.

This scholarship has first of all given me a great financial help. As a refugee, I was not eligible for government grants, so I had to pay full tuition. However, my family was not able to help me with any of the tuition costs. I almost chose not to go to UCI because I couldn't afford it. Luckily, my family helped me make the right choice by telling me not to give up. However, with the rising tuition, rent, and prices, I am still in a stressful situation. Therefore, this scholarship has relieved my financial burden and mental stress. I used to worry if I would rush to find a job I didn't like to pay my bills after I graduated from college because I was in debt. But now, I can afford to stick to what I like, such as quietly looking for a marketing-related job to achieve my career plan step by step.

This scholarship has also made me more confident. The scholarship is a spiritual affirmation for me. It is always heartwarming to receive help and affirmation from others when one is struggling with reality, and it will sustain me to keep going and not give in to reality. I can continue to encourage others around me who are in the same situation as me and show them from personal experience that where there's a will, there's a way!

Once again, thank you to the donors and the refugee sector for your efforts. You are like stars in a dark night, making light visible.

Sincerely,

Mengxing Chen

Sara Kassab

**Biological Sciences
Refugee Student Scholarship 2022-2023**



My Story:

I first want to thank you for choosing me for your incredible scholarship. I'm honored to be selected as a recipient of the Refugee Student Scholarship, thank you so much for your generosity. To tell you a bit about myself I was born and raised in Syria. I grew up in Aleppo with my family and all my relatives and truly had a wonderful childhood. In 2012 the Syrian civil war began and my family decided to come to America for a month and then return back home. The war worsened and we couldn't return which led us to apply for asylum. Living in a different country and learning a new language was tough on me at the start but I slowly started getting used to navigating my life in America. I graduated high school in 2019 wanting to pursue a career in dentistry. I

began my journey at community college and in 2021 I got accepted into UCI as a Biological Sciences major and I've had the best time. I got to join a dental-based research, and join the board of clubs such as Inspire to Aspire, Flying Samaritans, and Friends of Dialysis. Thank you again for your generosity. I want to help students achieve their goals just as you have helped me throughout my journey at UCI, you are one of the kindest people. Thank you for everything!

Thank You

Thank you so much for your graciousness and for providing me with financial support, I really appreciate it and I'm so thankful for the scholarship. There aren't many scholarships that I've seen that represent refugees, asylum seekers, or just people feeling their home country due to a certain reason so I want to thank you for creating this extraordinary scholarship. I also want to thank you because this money will help me towards my educational goals- whether it's for my tuition, food expenses, or buying textbooks for school; I will definitely use it for good.

Furthermore, this scholarship helps reduce my worry about financial concerns. It will help me academically by buying whatever a professor asks us to buy and removes my worry because I always stress about money. In other news, I will hopefully be graduating from UCI in 2023 as a Biology major, and thanks to you, I'm one step closer to my goal of becoming a dentist. This scholarship means so much to me, especially in this strange time living on and off in a pandemic and as someone who fled Syria's civil war.

I am so excited to graduate from UCI! I've been waiting for so long to get my bachelor's degree! I'm also excited to study for my DAT and attend dental school to continue my journey in higher education. Thank you again for your generosity I couldn't be more grateful.

Sincerely,

Sara Kassab

Delaram Heshmatifar

**Nursing
Refugee Student Scholarship 2022-2023**



My Story:

I moved to the United States when I was 9 years old from Tehran, Iran. Moving to the US, especially CA, was a major change that was super challenging for me. In Iran, I lived without the freedom that I have now living in California. My friends and I would spend our day walking to class every morning and back home in the afternoon, playing different instruments, playing with our various toys, and watching our favorite cartoons. These memorable moments are what I remember most of my hometown.

I chose to attend UCI as I grew up in Orange County and being close to my mother, who is a single-mom, was extremely important to me. UCI is a prestigious UC school that checked off all of my boxes. Additionally, it offered a nursing program which I was interested in pursuing. I'm so glad that I made this decision.

I am an incoming senior nursing student. Nursing has been something that has always intrigued me. In fact, I knew exactly from the first time that I went into a hospital that it is where I wanted to be along with other nurses and doctors. My grandfather was sick at the time and as I was too young to visit him alongside my family, I sat in the waiting room and watched as the nurses would calmly help the frantic patients. After sitting in the hospital chair for several hours, I was determined to help the hopeless patients that were waiting too. I always carried bandaids in my pink purse, so I walked to the closest patient and offered him the bandaid with a smile. My determination never ceased. Not sure about the specific profession I wanted to pursue, I began my search in the medical field in high school.

I started by volunteering at a variety of medical offices and some well-known hospitals such as St. Joseph Hospital and the CHOC pediatric surgeon department. I had learned that a career in the medical field required a dedicated, accountable, and honest individual who is always ready to take on challenges and work towards bettering society. My ability to empathize with others allowed me to connect and better communicate with hundreds of patients and doctors. By seeing what they are able to do every day, I was influenced to do just the same. After my extensive research in which field to specialize in, I have decided to become a CRNA, or a certified registered nurse anesthetist, a career that will definitely pose many challenges. Dr. David Gibbs talked to me extensively about his research and his path in becoming a pediatric surgeon and I couldn't help wanting to help patients, especially children, in need of medical attention. I was referred by Antoinetta Treacy from St. Joseph Hospital of Orange to apply for the Health Scholar program. I joined this program to aid in my path of becoming a CRNA as it is made for individuals to gain hands-on experience in the medical field. Although challenging, I am determined to work hard and portray what I can do along with learning as much as I can along the way.

I joined the UCI Rowing team during winter quarter of my junior year. The rowing team has taught me a lot of discipline, dedication, and team work. It was hard to balance the 5am practice time with the nursing clinical shifts that I had at the hospital but it was all worth it at the end of the day.

Thank You

I wanted to thank your foundation for providing students like me the funds to be able to pursue our dream careers. Coming from a challenging childhood and the biggest move from Iran to the United States, I never imagined that I would one day be studying at a university like UCI. I have worked hard to be where I am now and would never want something as small as financial issues hold me back from doing something that I love for the rest of my life. Your generosity helps families like mine, coming from a single mom household whose mom works three different jobs, in supporting their children's goals. I'm now in my last year of nursing school which is the final stretch. I'll be doing my clinical rotations in OB, Pediatrics, ICU/ Critical Care, and finally my preceptorship this year. I will also be working but with your help, I will be able to focus more on my studies and clinical shifts rather than picking up extra shifts to help my education.

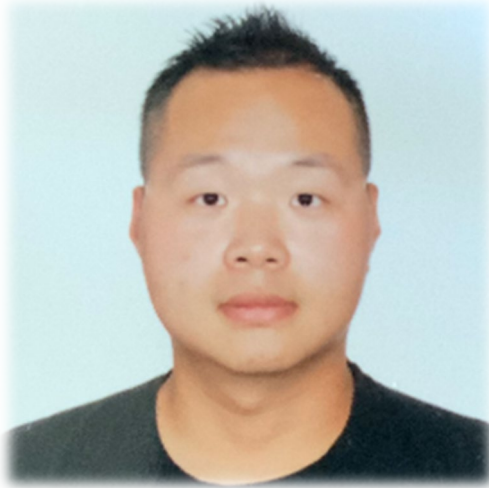
Your help will help me reach my dream of earning my BSN and later work towards becoming a CRNA without having the extra financial burden on my shoulders. Helping people has always been my passion. I want to be the person that delivers comfort to sick individuals and their families in a time that others cannot do so. By working at a hospital, I will be able to follow this passion and help so many individuals. Your contribution to my education is so genius and unforgettable and I cannot wait to make everyone around me proud by achieving my goals and dreams. Thanks once again for all of your support!

Sincerely,

Delaram Heshmatifar

Tony Gao

**Art & Graphic Design
Refugee Student Scholarship 2022-2023**



My Story:

I was born in Shanghai, China, one of the four direct-administered municipalities in China. It happens to be the most populous urban area in China and the most populous city proper in the world. The entire city has developed rapidly over the last 20 years. There is also a Disneyland in Shanghai, which attracts many tourists regularly. The traffic is as bad as in Los Angeles. If you miss one exit on the freeway, be ready to spend an hour just going around the freeway and exit.

I attend UCI for my major because of the faculty, staff, and those who already graduated. There are extraordinary and professional faculties and staff on the campus. Numerous professors from the Art Department run their own exhibitions in well-known art galleries and museums in the U.S. Likewise, UCI happens to be one of the top 10 public academies in the country that offers more than 85 undergraduate degree programs and opportunities to work along with studying. Many renowned webinars and seminars are happening at UCI which additionally offer especially UCI students to work potentially.

My major is Art and Graphic Design. I got such great talent from my father. I was a little tail following him when I was little. He taught me how to make designs without any digital devices. Therefore, I follow in his footsteps so I can accomplish something he couldn't achieve.

My favorite UCI memory to date is when I got my first refugee scholarship when I was just admitted to UCI in 2020. At that time, I was extremely struggling with tuition fees, which led me to other concerns. When I heard I was awarded the refugee scholarship, I felt like rain on the fire. It was a great relief.

I am a continuing student and I have been involved in many on and off-campus activities, such as ASUCI and Beall Applied Innovation at the Cove. I am currently working as a graphic designer at Beall Applied Innovation at the Cove to enhance my skill set.

My current career goal is to work at any UC campus, UCLA, UCI, or any. I'd like to continue to contribute my talents to improve our campus quality while learning everything new daily.

Thank You

Miss. Iman Siddiqi, UCI Financial Aid and Scholarship Office, and Other Donors

Refugee Student Scholarship Program, University of California, Irvine

Dear Iman Siddiqi, Refugee Student Scholarship Program Donors, and UCI

I am writing to express my sincere gratitude to you for making this generous donation possible for students like me who are seeking financial aid. I was shockingly excited about being selected to receive this honor and I am truly appreciating your support.

I am currently majoring in Art and Graphic Design at UCI with hopes of pursuing a master's degree and being an art assistant and a talented graphic designer in the future after my graduation. This precious assistance you provided will be fully helpful to pay for my educational debt and expenses; and, it will help cover my parents' budget, who were both retired. With this financial assistance, I am going to focus on studying and involving in campus activities. When I graduate, I'd love to continue to involve around the campus to keep contributing.

Thank you again for your generosity and great support. With this scholarship award, I will be able to practice extensively with Adobe Suite. I promise I will delve into my courses to earn a good grade as to how much I appreciate this golden opportunity. I'd love to eventually give something back to those seekers, just like how I was awarded. Furthermore, I love to contribute to this scholarship program in the future.

Sincerely,

Tony Gao

Mo Bagaber

**Psychology
Refugee Student Scholarship 2022-2023**



My Story:

Hello,

My name is Mohanad Bagaber. I'm an immigrant from Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. I first moved with my mom and dad to the US in 2006 when they became government-sponsored international students. Since then, life has been difficult. I struggled socially since I'm an incredibly introverted person and I was constantly moving around. I spent most of my life away from my extended family and in middle school, my mental health started suffering as domestic disputes at home escalated. I'm still dealing with many of these issues today but I'm happy to say that my life has been improving for many reasons.

I'm currently studying at UCI to become a clinical psychologist that can help people struggling with many of the problems that I went through. The classes I take are interesting, and I've recently started running Dungeons and Dragons campaigns through the Tabletop Games Club. I'm currently applying for Special Immigrant Juvenile Status (SIJS) and recently received news that my first hearing is in November. I've made a few good friends at UCI who I trust in and understand. My work permit application has been approved, meaning I can finally start working and qualify for a background check to tutor young students that are struggling academically.

Thank You

Thank you for awarding me this scholarship when my family has been struggling financially. As I have previously mentioned, I have been unable to work for the past two years because I did not have a work permit. My family's budget has become more and more strained during this time as they've dealt with inflation and are soon expecting a child.

I was worried that I would have to take a leave of absence from university as my financial aid package was significantly reduced this year, but I was relieved when this decision was repealed on appeal and I received this scholarship award. I am especially grateful because a large portion of this award will help me pay for my mental health treatment.

This scholarship will give me more time to do meaningful things like tutor at-risk youth and join programs dedicated to community service and the promotion of mental health. It will make the

financial burden of going to immigration court less costly. It will help me finish my last two years of undergraduate study without getting into debt, which means I can more quickly enroll in a Psy.D program and become a clinical psychologist. Thank you for making these many personal challenges less daunting and making it easier for me to pursue my dream of helping people live more productive and meaningful lives.

Sincerely,

Mo Bagaber