

What BΘO alumni say

Emi Matsuura, VP of Operations, interviews former Chapter President **Mike Wong**. Mike has graduated from U.C., Davis with a baccalaureate in Biology and is currently working in biotechnology. As Chapter president, Mike received the Nevada/ California Outstanding Chapter President award.

Emi: Why did you participate in Beta Theta Omicron?

Mike: It was my first semester at Skyline College in Fall 1999. Many of my friends didn't go to college. I didn't know many people. I wasn't sure what to study in college and I also wanted to expand my social network. One day I saw a ΦΘK flyer advertising for new members. The flyer said it offered activities (conferences, monthly meetings, social events, etc.) but also focused on academics. I went to one of the general meetings and was really shy at first, but everyone seemed to have open arms. From that day on, I was hooked. Not just because of the social opportunities but also the ability to be surrounded by people who appreciate academics and also want to provide service to the community.

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

Mike: ΦΘK didn't help me to get into the major directly, but it did expose me to many people who had experienced or are experiencing the same paths to take in deciding which major to study. In other words, ΦΘK helped me surround myself with goal-oriented people who cared about academics and there future.

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

Mike: When I first started in college, I was extremely shy and clueless with how to communicate with people outside of high school. I was intimidated with starting conversations and was afraid that I didn't measure up talking to new people. Being an officer for ΦΘK slowly built my confidence and ability to interact with new faces. Probably the best part about being an officer is attending meetings and conferences where you are encouraged to meet new people. ΦΘK is a great organization because it actually exposes you to real life situation and presents you with opportunities you will eventually experience after college, but not necessarily during college. ΦΘK will help you accelerate your personal growth in the real world.

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

Mike: Membership in ΦΘK definitely helped in applying for jobs because ΦΘK is not a club it's a professional organization. And because many of the activities we do are service activities and social, you will have more confidence and experience to offer during a job interview or on a resume.

Emi: What has Beta Theta Omicron meant to you?

Mike: Honestly speaking—ΦΘK was the best thing that happened to me in college. If it wasn't for ΦΘK, I would be a different person. ΦΘK helped me grow during college. I was able to overcome my fear of public speaking, build my ability to talk to new people and learn the importance of teamwork.