UCI’s Outdoor Program Helps Keep One Special Student at UCI

Stephanie Hwang credits UCI Campus Recreation’s Outdoor Programs for saving her college education.

Like a lot of new college students, Stephanie Hwang felt lost at a big university. Between the pressures of a rigorous academic curriculum and mounting stress of wanting to find a way to fit, Stephanie turned to UCI’s Campus Recreation department and their leadership oriented outdoor program for help. “I remember the first time Doug (the Outdoor Programs Director) gently nudged me to lead a small group hiking and the task seemed terrifying. But through Doug’s supportive guidance, the outdoor program ultimately taught me the soft and hard skills of how to instruct climbing courses, lead camping trips, listen to the needs of the participants, and most importantly, understand my strengths and weaknesses.” commented Stephanie Hwang.

Stephanie started her involvement with Campus Recreation’s Outdoor Program by signing up for the Outdoor Student Trip Leader Training course and believes her experience saved her from dropping out of UCI. “At the time, I was on the brink of dropping out of college because I was not doing well academically, nor was I passionate about my studies ...” remarked Stephanie, but with the community support from instructors and other Outdoor Program participants, Stephanie was able to find her niche at UCI and really excel in her college career. “Stephanie is a remarkable young woman and I’m extremely proud of what we achieved together during her time at UCI. Changing the lives of students and shaping future leaders is what our program is truly about.” stated Doug Tully, Director of UCI Outdoor Programs.

Stephanie went on to earn her master’s degree in Bio Sci Educational Media Design and now works as a videographer for a laboratory that conducts scientific research on behalf of the United States Department of Energy.

For more information about UCI Campus Recreation’s Outdoor Programs, students are encouraged contact Doug Tully at dtully@uci.edu or 949.824.0388