

Welcome to CCIS monthly newsletter!  
 Our goal is to provide news, program updates, and stories about life in the U.S. to international graduate students, post docs, visiting scholars, and their families at Stanford.

Please let us know if you would like to write an article for a future newsletter.

## My Stanford Story

By Alan Tan

In March of 2022, I came to Stanford University from China, as my partner was pursuing her PhD at the University. We met four years ago through a Leadership Development Program in the field of Marine Conservation. After she left for her Ph.D program, we could not stand living apart any longer, so I temporarily put aside my work in China and came to California to be with her.

On my first day at Stanford, my partner took me around the University campus. I was attracted by the beauty of the landscape: the church, the sculptures, the trees, the botanical gardens, and the vast sports fields. What impressed me the most was the statue of the Stanford family in the Memorial Garden. Leland Stanford Junior held a piece of paper with the words "Dedicated to science and the good of humanity". The sentence made me think of the philosophy proposed by Immanuel Kant on human reasoning and free will. And so, I understand the words on the statue to imply more his "dedication to human reasoning and freedom".



While walking around campus, the word "cardinal" caught my eye. My partner told me that cardinal was the color of Stanford. I know that this word also has a religious background, as it refers to the original sin of men. In the Bible, original sin refers to the sin committed by Adam and Eve, who disobeyed God's order and ate the forbidden fruit. In Kant's philosophy, the fundamental evil of man refers to the inversion of human nature, that is, hypocrisy. I think I understand the philosophical and religious significance behind the founding of Stanford University, as well as the moral passion involved. Of course, this is my guess. I think the establishment of Stanford University is a very important cornerstone to the historical development of Stanford University, which was not just about the wealth of the Stanford family.

We live on the Stanford campus and my partner helped me connect to resources at the Stanford Bechtel International Center. I started to sign up for English courses and met new teachers and friends. My partner knew that I liked sports, especially soccer, so she helped me sign up for intramural sports. I also found a group that played soccer regularly at Robel Field and joined them.

The Stanford [Bechtel International Center](#) or I-Center, as it is otherwise sometimes known, is a great place for the international community at Stanford! Along with CCIS, they offer many activities and learning opportunities for international students and their families, including regular coffee hours and University campus walks, all of which have allowed me to make many new friends.

I am very grateful for what the I-Center has done for us international families. In order to contribute back to the community, I actively looked for volunteer opportunities in the center. For example, Tooran, the CCIS volunteer leader of the Global Chefs program, which runs alongside the Windows on the West movie program every Friday, needed some help with preparing meals, cooking, setting tables, washing dishes, etc for hosting the Windows on the West movie program. I often went to help and found it to be always a joy to be able to help others with my own strength.



Stanford offers a lot of events in Art and Music for the international student community and their families. My partner and I went to the Bing Concert Hall to watch performances almost every week. We enjoyed musicals, ballet, modern dance, symphony orchestra, Taiko, American traditional folk music, rock bands, and a Cloud Gate Dance Theater performance from Taiwan and so on. These performances have made our lives so colorful and have fed our spirits.



Over the weekends, my partner and I explored interesting places around the Stanford campus, and at times we took public transportation or a Zipcar. Some of our favorite places include the Filoli Historic House and Garden, Gamble Garden, and the Palo Alto Children's Museum. We also went to Half Moon Bay for a big pumpkin festival. There was a grand parade and food made from local pumpkins and several band performances at the festival. This festival has a history of more than 100 years, and it is a good model for businesses to give back to the local community. We felt good about spending money here.



I also got to know the professors, other students, and exchange scholars at the Stanford Center on Chinese Economy and Institutions. I communicated with them a lot about China's education and social issues and learned about some of their projects in China. I think it would be great if my town could collaborate with Stanford University on an educational program for local kids one day.

In my English classes, I met many good teachers and classmates. Sometimes we had lunch together after class and shared our stories. At the end of each quarter, some teachers would organize a party for us, such as a potluck. Some teachers invited us to their homes for Thanksgiving and hosted a formal holiday meal. This was my first Thanksgiving in the US. I felt very lucky, happy, and grateful to be welcomed like this by the greater Stanford Community. My good teachers and classmates at Stanford have inspired me to bring kindness and beauty to the world every day.



In summary, I have learned a lot from my nine months at Stanford. I am very grateful for the friends, teachers, classmates, and teammates I have met here. I have received a lot of kindness and friendship from many people. I know more about America, about the world and about the many different cultures in the world now than I did before. I have learned how to establish relationships among different people in a community and how to earn people's goodwill. When I came back to China, back to my village community, I knew what I could do to make it better. Thank you, Stanford.

## CCIS Spouse Education Funds in Action

By Micaela De Poi Segovia



I want to thank CCIS at Stanford for giving me the opportunity to grow in my professional career with this full tuition for the Fundamentals of Project Management course in the Stanford Continuing Studies Program.

This is a great opportunity for all of us who are part of the International Spouses Community at Stanford University.

Thank you CCIS for the work you do for us every day.



## Life coaching sessions... an enjoyable journey with myself

By Enkeleda Balliu



I started my postdoctoral training in mid-October 2022, more precisely six months and one day after my graduation from Mid Sweden University (Sweden). When I came here, I had mixed feelings; everything was so familiar and so different at the same time. I have been at Stanford several times before, in 2018 and 2019, as a visiting student. Every time that I land at this magical university, welcoming and inspiring vibes accompany me. And this time I experienced them too and so many other new things. This time I came here with my husband and my son. I experienced the beauty of running in Palm Drive with my son during a sunny day in November, the beauty of watching for several minutes the squirrels playing with the acorns, and the beauty of being part of the Bechtel community.

As a newly graduated Ph.D., I am very eager to continue my professional and personal growth. Therefore, right after I came here to Stanford, embraced by the endless opportunities to grow in every aspect, I decided to have 'my smart lunches'. These are lunch breaks that I dedicate to workshops that contribute positively to my professional and personal growth, and that makes me think and reflect on myself. And it was in one of 'my smart lunches' after an amazing workshop on empowering women's leadership and management skills, conducted by Nina Warnecke, where I had the opportunity to talk with Kate Khatseyeva, President of CCIS at Stanford. Talking with Kate I got to know about the Career Coaching Program offered by CCIS in collaboration with Erickson Coaching International. Thanks to her I got the opportunity to be part of it and to receive six coaching sessions. Couldn't have been better timing for me!!! My coach was Lily Bogdanova, a very professional life coach!!! My smart lunches now evolved into empowering mornings.

Every Tuesday for six weeks in a row I participated in individual reflections and exercises that helped me to articulate my core values, my strengths, and cleared my vision for the future. Through these coaching sessions, I reinforced my priorities, and I reflected on who am I and what matters to me. After each of the coaching sessions, I felt so energized, inspired, and happy.

The best thing that I learned was to give time to myself to reflect. And now that the six weeks have passed, I continue to practice all the routines that I learned through these coaching sessions; I feel so energized, inspired, and happy every day. As Anne Alimott says "Almost everything will work again if you unplug it for a few minutes, including you"



If you enjoyed this newsletter, please feel free to share this link with your international friends at Stanford so they can receive it too.



CCIS this month is edited by Kirsty Lienard, Arthi Britto, and Kate Khatseyeva.

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