***The Personal Statement is an opportunity for you to provide additional information that may aid the selection committee in evaluating your preparation and aptitude for graduate study at UCLA.***

***Please respond to one or more of the following prompts. Your statement can be up to 500 words in length (approximately 1-page, single spaced, using 1-inch margins and 12-point font). To be considered for a Cota-Robles or Graduate Opportunity fellowship, be sure to describe your contributions to diversity. The University of California Diversity Statement can be found online***

* ***Are there educational, personal, cultural, economic, or social experiences, not described in your Statement of Purpose, that have shaped your academic journey? If so, how? Have any of these experiences provided a unique perspective(s) that you would contribute to your program, field or profession?***
* ***Describe challenge(s) or barriers that you have faced in your pursuit of higher education. What motivated you to persist, and how did you overcome them? What is the evidence of your persistence, progress or success?***
* ***How have your life experiences and educational background informed your understanding of the barriers facing groups that are underrepresented in higher education?***
* ***How have you been actively engaged (e.g., through participation, employment, service, teaching or other activities) in programs or activities focused on increasing participation by groups that have been historically underrepresented in higher education?***
* ***How do you intend to engage in scholarly discourse, research, teaching, creative efforts, and/or community engagement during your graduate program that have the potential to advance diversity and equal opportunity in higher education?***
* ***How do you see yourself contributing to diversity in your profession after you earn your advanced degree at UCLA?***

One cannot determine their starting point. However, one can choose their life’s objectives and learn to deal with one’s limitations to reach their objectives; I strongly relate to this statement. Being born and raised in a middle-class, conventional Indo-Chinese family who believes women cannot become a successful entrepreneur because they don’t possess business instincts, this culture has somewhat limitedly predetermined my future paths. However, I choose to go against this conventional mindset.

Living in a 5-people middle-class Indo-Chinese household with all women except for my dad, he obviously dreamed of having at least one son to continue his legacy. As the family’s eldest child, my dad had no choice but to raise me assuming that I would be his business’s successor. He would always give me his words of wisdom related to business, suggest that I read more business books, teach me logistics and operations (his field of business), bring me to his business meetings with fellow entrepreneurs, and even make me frequent his office since college. There are countless moments where I had to make emergency decisions, or needed to attend business meetings – with his consent – when my dad is out-of-town. Note that this only applies to me and not to my sisters; they have the freedom to do whatever they want, whenever they want. Yes, he expects me to gain as much business experience as possible.

From what I observed during my frequent office visits, nearly 90% of his employees are male. It’s not uncommon for me to hear discouraging comments on how his male employees would underestimate the ability of women: they would put their “respect” label only to my dad or their supervisors, who are male, and I could feel how they would subtly undermine the women staff asking them to do menial tasks despites these women’s high aptitude at work, such as preparing beverages or making photocopies. While I find those instances ludicrous, I’m more surprised by the women’s willingness to do those tasks repeatedly.

At this point, I knew that gender inequality is still a big issue here, and not many are taking a step forward to make changes. While world organizations have taken efforts to tackle the issue all over the world, it seems that the conventional cultural upbringing in Indonesia still outweighs these efforts.

As a part of my intention in reforming gender equality, I believe being in the top position of the society’s organization is one way to reform conventional mindsets in Indonesia because it helps in getting your voice heard by the society, and pursuing higher education is my first step to gain this top spot in the organization.

Hence, pursuing an MSc in Business Analytics not only will help me with my path towards my future leadership position, but also realize my dad’s and my dream to succeed his legacy. At the end of the day, I just want to be among the few females in the society who work hard in gaining the top spot, and using her position to advocate gender equality as a remembrance of where she came from; just the way my dad did, does, and will encourage me.

Hi Clarysa:

A general note, I think it’s good to insert the human side of your story – like how you feel and how your father feels about your decisions and the situations. This will help the reader in understanding your narrative better.

All the best!