Angela Meng

Angela Meng is fearless. Just three years ago she began as an international student in the Global Student Success Program (GSSP) here at UNH. “I actually didn’t plan to study abroad at all—I didn’t have my English score. I did a lot of studying on my own,” Angela explained. When she did end up taking the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) exam, Angela was able to skip two levels of English in the normal GSSP curriculum—putting her on track to graduate in four years. In fact, Angela already had one year of university experience in her home country of China, where she also ran track. At UNH, she was primarily interested in the Hospitality Management program in the Peter T. Paul College of Business and Economics.

It was a difficult transition at first. “I missed my family; I was really homesick,” Angela admitted. Taking advice from other students, Angela quickly joined several student organizations to keep busy, including Delta Xi Phi (DXP), the multicultural sorority, for which she currently serves as President, and the International Student Organization (ISO). Last year, Angela served as the emcee for the Lunar New Year Celebration and, as representative of ISO, accepted the Campus Collaboration Award for its work on the event with the Vietnamese Student Association and the United Asian Coalition. In her busy schedule, Angela also found the time to do a presentation entitled “Finding Europe in China” for the Cultural Connections program in the MUB.

In addition to joining those two groups, Angela realized that her true calling was accounting. “It’s a lot more than math—it’s about the way you think and keep things organized,” she said. Her Accounting 502 course was difficult, but the material was so interesting that she was hooked. Her sophomore year, Angela went to an internship information session for Ernst & Young in Boston and was accepted into their highly competitive internship program for this summer. Angela hopes this internship will help her connect accounting to different fields—like sports and medicine.

Angela isn’t just a leader in the classroom; she’s a leader in athletics too. After training for more than 10 years as a track athlete in China—she runs the 100 and 200 meter—Angela walked in to the Field House here on campus and asked to join the UNH Track and Field team. Her first meet is this spring. “My coach said I’m courageous for first walking in to his office. I’m the only Asian [student] on the track team,” Angela said. While she spends a lot of time at the Field House, Angela says that her favorite place on campus is the Office of International Students and Scholars (OISS). She was one of the OISS Orientation Leaders for the fall of 2018. “I am pretty close with [the staff]—they are very open-minded and are always there when I need help,” she said.

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One of Angela’s biggest role models is former CYOS recipient and UNH graduate Bella Bai. Angela became connected with Bella through the GSSP program and they have stayed connected since Bella moved back to China. Belle VuKovich Kenoyer, an Assistant Director of Residential Life, is another influential person in Angela’s life. She encouraged Angela to go to Sophomore Summit and they still get lunch together and catch up. Last spring break, Angela also attended Leadership Camp. “It really is the best week ever,” Angela said.

When asked about how she’s changed since starting at UNH, Angela said, “I’ve definitely become more confident—that’s for sure… I think I’ve become more open-minded as well. [Learning about] diversity and inclusion has been really important to me. I learned a lot about how we can understand each other despite different cultures and backgrounds.” Social justice is certainly a passion area for Angela: she attended both the MLK Summit and Impact Conference, where she learned about the importance of having a culture of care, social identity, self-care, and person-first language.

As for the future, it depends on how her internship with Ernst & Young goes and how long Angela wants to stay in the U.S. She feels that the community is closer knit here in Durham than in a large city like Beijing, but her end goal is to end up back with her family in China. Her advice for other UNH students is simple yet profound: “Try as much as you can while you are here.”