

STUDENT TESTIMONIAL

Going through IB made me prioritize the things that I value most in life and to set really clear short-term milestones.

Rona Ji
DP Graduate
Interlake High School
Washington, US



Rona Ji received her IB diploma from Interlake High School, Washington, US. She is now a senior at Yale University studying economics and ethnicity, race and migration.

Why did you originally decide to pursue an IB diploma?

My pathway to the IB diploma was a mixture of wanting the most challenging academic experience for myself and a bit of sibling rivalry. I had seen my older brother Mason Ji grow through the IB Diploma Programme (DP) and thought, "If he can do it, then I should be able to." We both later pursued native language bilingual diplomas in English and Chinese, and there aren't a lot of other rigorous options in US high schools that would have allowed us to take such an advanced route with a second native language. Learning to write well and think creatively is something I credit to my IB experience. Four years out of IB, I've really felt the benefits and I can see how important it is to communicate well no matter what discipline you choose to pursue.

How did you reach where you are today?

Coming from a Chinese American family, I wanted to learn about how individuals and institutions are dealing with the changing realities brought on by globalizing markets. Most of my work revolves around connecting and educating communities that previously had little dialogue with each other. I have had the fortune to help initiate the Tsinghua-University of Washington technological exchange program (now known as Global Innovation Exchange), work with the White House Initiative on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, and be named as one of *China Hands Magazine's* "25 Under 25: Leaders in US-China Relations" in 2016.

The hardest thing for any young person to do, I believe, is to climb back up after being told "no." Going through IB made me prioritize the things that I value most in life and to set really clear short-term milestones. To put things into an IB perspective, for my year 1 English individual oral presentation, I hadn't yet overcome my fear of public speaking and ended up with the equivalent of a 3/7 on the IB scale. I had no idea what to do from there and ended up focusing on improving my work one assignment at a time, rather than setting lofty goals. In the end, I ended up learning from my mistakes and

came out with a 7 in English overall. Now, every time I experience a setback, I reflect on my strengths and work on my weaknesses one at a time. Then, I get up where I fell down and try again.

Which of your IB teachers inspired you most?

I had amazing teachers throughout my IB years and they worked together to keep me on my toes and thinking. If I had to choose one teacher, though, it'd be my English teacher, Mr. Calvert. He was one of those teachers who had amazing presence and could put your essay through the wringer, but still leave it coming out better on the other side. It was amazing. I think my class was in awe of him and scared of him at the same time, but he is one of those teachers that you never forget for the rest of your life.