

THE MASTER'S PROGRAM

First Lu Lingzi Scholar at Boston University

YIFAN XU (MAEP '17)

Lingzi Lu was a Master's student in mathematics from China and a beloved member of the BU community whose life was tragically cut short by the Boston Marathon bombing. The Lu Lingzi Scholarship Fund was created by members of the Boston University Board of Trustees, the BU community, and many other individuals from around the world to keep Lu Lingzi's memory and example alive. It is awarded to outstanding international students who pursue master's degree at BU.

The Economics Master's Program is honored and thrilled to host the first Lu Lingzi Scholar. Yifan Xu graduated from Renmin University in Beijing, China, a premier academic and research institution with a rigorous economics curriculum that prepares students for successful graduate studies in the US. Yifan is a confident, energetic, and sociable young person with a positive outlook. She was admitted to the Master of Arts in Economics Policy (MAEP) program in Fall 2016.

YOU HAD DECIDED TO COME TO THE ECONOMICS MASTER'S PROGRAM AT BOSTON UNIVERSITY EVEN BEFORE YOU KNEW ABOUT THE LU LINGZI SCHOLARSHIP. WHAT MADE YOU CHOOSE BU? WHAT DID YOU KNOW ABOUT US WHEN YOU WERE IN CHINA?

I was attracted to the economics program at BU as soon as I saw its website. The program structure is very reasonable and it offers abundant fields of studies. It is ranked amongst the Top 30 master's program in the United States. Geographically, Boston also appeals to me. The city has a unique academic environment, and good local transportation.

In China, Boston University is widely known as one of the most influential private universities in the world. I heard about it when I was still in high school, and some of my classmates came to BU for their bachelor's degree. Many BU economics alumni are famous in China. For instance, Dr. **Jin-Yong Cai** (PhD '90) was head of Goldman Sachs in China and later became CEO of the International Finance Corporation.

WHAT WAS YOUR REACTION WHEN YOU LEARNED THAT YOU WERE AWARDED THE LU LINGZI SCHOLARSHIP?

I felt immensely honored and grateful. As soon as I heard the good news I rushed to share it with my parents. Then I started to learn more about Lingzi Lu and the Boston Marathon bombing. Back in high school in China I learned about the Battles of Lexington and Concord, and the struggle for freedom and democracy. I think the marathon is a great way to celebrate the American spirit. What happened on that day in 2013, and how it claimed the life of this innocent, beloved and promising young student, was a tragedy that struck me deeply. But I was also inspired by how the city and the university rallied, and the kindness and generosity shown to the victims and bereft. It was this spirit that moved the BU Terriers and Board of Trustees to establish a scholarship in honor of Ms. Lu's memory. When I applied to the economics master's program at BU, I could not imagine that I would become a beneficiary of their noble mission and part of the Lu Lingzi legacy.

HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE THE ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE OF YOUR FIRST YEAR IN THE MAEP PROGRAM? WHAT ARE YOUR FIELDS OF INTEREST, FAVORITE CLASSES AND PROFESSORS? WHAT DO YOU LOOK FORWARD TO THE MOST IN YOUR SECOND YEAR?

The first-year core courses deepened my understanding in micro- and macroeconomics. At the same time, I got some exposure to



financial economics and accounting. Not only are my classes intensive and challenging, but I also felt that our teachers care deeply about their students. I was also able to take advantage of the many extracurricular activities and services provided by the master's program, such as the Excel training and resume workshops.

I love Professor **Adam Guren's** macroeconomics course, with its abstract view of consumption, investments, and economic growth. I have also benefitted a great deal from Professor **Arindam Bandopadhyaya's** exceptional teaching skill and his well-designed course project. Then there is Professor **Hsueh-Ling Huynh**, our program director and academic advisor, whose constant guidance and encouragement is very much

appreciated.

Currently I am pursuing finance as one of my specialty fields, and my goal is to master the subjects of corporate finance and investments. In my second year, I will try to focus on an area of economics that interests me the most, and find a faculty advisor to guide me in independent research.

HOW ABOUT LIFE IN BOSTON? NOW YOU HAVE LIVED HERE FOR ALMOST A YEAR, WHAT ARE YOUR IMPRESSIONS OF THE CULTURE, THE PEOPLE, AND DAILY LIFE? WHAT DO YOU DO FOR FUN?

Boston is steeped in arts and culture. I have tried to take advantage of its rich offerings of music, theater, and museums. Compared with other places I've visited in the States, Boston is more like an elegant classical European city and not so much a modern but overcrowded metropolis.

It is also a friendly place for Chinese students to live. Boston has a lot of Chinese restaurants and grocery stores, conveniently located and easily accessible. I even managed to find a Chinese herbalist clinic when I fell ill recently. According to some Chinese sources, the Boston area has the "second highest concentration of intelligence in America" (the first being in Silicon Valley). It probably meant that it has a highly educated, professional population with an open and international outlook. That makes its residents friendly and accepting toward international students. I was equally impressed by the faith and love shown by the people I met in the local evangelical churches. Perhaps it was no accident that Boston would cherish the memory of a young foreigner like Lingzi Lu.

WHAT ARE YOUR CAREER PLANS AND PERSONAL ASPIRATIONS AFTER EARNING YOUR MASTER'S DEGREE?

Chances are very high that I will go on to pursue a PhD degree. The master's program is preparing me well for that academic challenge. It is also giving me the necessary confidence. The systematic training in economics through graduate school will give me powerful quantitative tools, and make me a rigorous and critical thinker. That can be used to tackle almost any problem in the world.

ANY ADVICE FOR STUDENTS BACK HOME WHO ARE THINKING OF GOING TO THE GRADUATE SCHOOL IN THE US?

I encourage them to consider it very seriously. A country's development is measured by the education of its citizens. Besides, going abroad and experiencing the culture shock will change your intellectual perspective forever and expand your mental horizon. In the long run, this will give you a tremendous edge in your capabilities and your career. Moreover, I encourage everyone back home to consider BU. Boston is a great place and BU is a sound institution with tremendous potential for rapid growth and a lot of opportunities for international students.