

GOAL REFLECTION ESSAY: THEN AND NOW

By Tracy Liu

When I first decided that I wanted to pursue my Master's degree in early 2017, I had a very different goal back then in comparison to today.

In reflecting on my two main essays (I had answered the main required essay and provided a supplemental essay) that I submitted at the time of my Michigan State University (MSU) application for the 2018 Summer admission cohort, they were completely revolved around my now gone Independent Education Consulting business.

At the time of my application, I was in a very unfulfilling job and was seeking to do something else that brought me more meaning. I got hired part time to help with college admissions essays at a private tutoring company and loved it. I felt like I made a difference in a young teen's life in helping them craft their personal statement because I got to know them and saw all the potential they could have in the world. I was sure back then I could dedicate myself to doing this full time and be self-employed. Feel free to read them below:

[MSU MAED Application Professional Goal Statement](#)

[MSU MAED Application Optional Supplemental Statement](#)

At the same time I took on my first clients, I wanted to further seek a Masters program that I thought would give me a deeper understanding of our American education system so I could be a more effective consultant. After a combination of taking EAD 870 Foundations of Postsecondary Education, the infamous **College Admissions Scandal** that came out in March 2019, and seeing my client's parents also trying to ask me to find "shortcuts" to get their kids into "top" universities, I made a decision to end my practice. While my clients successfully gained admission into their top schools, I couldn't in good conscience continue contributing to the college admissions craze.

In August 2019 I switched to my current department in Economics as the Academic Personnel analyst where I support my faculty in their needs at University of California, San Diego (UCSD). I discovered a newfound joy in working in administration in being part of a nurturing department that exposes me to a lot of different skills. Furthermore, I feel immense pride supporting one of the top **Economics Graduate programs** in the nation and seeing the inspiring research our economists create. I started to see a new pathway in making a bigger impact in my school. As a result, I switched my courses to focus on more higher education leadership topics which have been super fascinating. In this respect, I was lucky to choose a program that had that flexibility available for me.

My goals have obviously changed dramatically since the start of this program. My shift to higher education leadership has been far more fulfilling as I have a lot of variety in my day-to-day life. It feels good to partner with my faculty, business office and other offices around UCSD to ensure our operations run smoothly. So far, I have been able to readily apply class theory in my strategic work and projects and I still continue to benefit from my program today. I'm excited to see what other pathways will open up for me professionally in my near future.