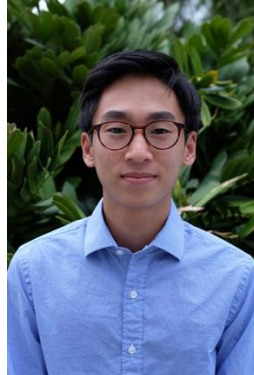


## MICHAEL WANG: Class of 2021

Dreyfoos School of the Arts

Columbia College: Economics



What can you tell us about your freshman year and what advice would you give to students starting out in their new college settings?

*I really enjoyed my first year and learned a ton! I am diving into the economics major at Columbia, which I have found to be really fascinating, and also exploring interests of history, political science, and philosophy on the side.*

*The end of the first semester for me was overwhelming with exams and papers, along with experiencing the first real winter of my life. Adapting to a new environment can be challenging, and it is important to stay organized and plan ahead. Some weeks will have really light workloads, and others will be unending, so having good time management is essential. I found time management to make a large difference in the second semester and allowed me to perform well in the classroom while having plenty time to pursue interests outside.*

*Outside of the classroom, I immersed myself in a vibrant Columbia community. During the first semester, I taught a weekly debate class at a low-income middle school and worked on a project consulting an environmental non-profit with its membership structure. I joined the debate team and was elected next year's team secretary. I went to a number of debate tournaments, including the United States Universities Debating Championships, where I was novice champion, and the North American Debate Championships, where I finished in the top 4 novice teams and was named 5th best novice speaker. I also joined Lion Fund, a student-run hedge fund, which gave me a hands-on experience with investment. Through student groups, I found places to both expand my knowledge and meet new people. It is important to have groups that you can call home, and they exist in every nook and cranny on campus.*

*The opportunities college offers are endless. I was nominated and selected to Columbia's Advisory Committee on Socially Responsible Investing. The committee is composed of four alumni, four students, and four faculty members and as the name suggest, we advise the Trustees on ethical issues that arise with endowment investment. That means considering student proposals, advising on shareholder proposals, and monitoring divestment screens. I was the first freshman to ever be selected. In college, there are opportunities floating around all over the place, and it never hurts to send out an application or email!*

How are you spending your summer?

*I was chosen to be a part of the first cohort of the Laidlaw Scholarship here at Columbia. It is a 2-year research and leadership program that started with a 6-week session this summer. I researched labor market effects of variations in occupational licensing legislation during the Progressive Era. It was a great opportunity to explore independent, self-directed research, and while challenging, I learned a lot about economic theory, the history of the Progressive Era, statistical programs, and how academia functions.*

*After that program, I headed back down to Florida to work for the Broward Vice Mayor, where I am working on a proposal to fund a pilot program for a last-dollar scholarship to low-income Broward students who attend Broward College. I'm also spending a lot of time reading, relaxing, and soaking up as much of the Florida sun as I can before I head back to the city.*

What thoughts do you have about your immediate future?

*I am definitely majoring in economics, and I want to take classes in history, political science, and statistics. I'm really interested in economic development and I plan to learn and gain experience with it. In the meantime, I'm focused on learning as much as I possibly can and helping out in my local community.*