

LEAP OF GRACE

Undeterred by the unknown, Grace finds **success** 10,000 miles from home

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WITH A DEEP BREATH AND A LEAP OF FAITH, GRACE ZHENG BOARDED A PLANE HEADED TO THE OTHER SIDE OF THE WORLD.

She traveled more than 10,000 miles from Tianjin, China to Waco, Texas to attend Baylor University—without having ever visited.

Growing up in China, she attended traditional Chinese school through middle school, and then switched to an international school in high school. Zheng preferred a Western education, so when she started looking at colleges, she looked to the U.S.

"I grew up in a Christian family in China, and my parents wanted me to go to a Christian-environment college," she said. "I chose Baylor because the culture is one of the best I could ever experience. I hadn't been to Baylor yet, but the international student office was so helpful. I feel like at Baylor everybody cares about the students. They want each one of us to succeed."

So, she made the judgment call and went to Baylor. At Baylor, she became a student tutor, volunteered with the Prison Entrepreneurship Program and landed two internships with Big Four companies (KPMG LLP and PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) LLP). Four and a half years later, she left with a BBA and a master's degree in Information Systems (programs that traditionally take five or more years to complete) and headed to the PwC New York office to begin a new journey—her career.

"When I attended school, and work too, I tend to do more than is asked for," Zheng said. "If I can have the opportunity to give advice to incoming students, I'd always tell them to do more than is asked, for then, you'll always get a lot more than is asked for. And, remember to be thankful for everything that has been offered."

Initially hired on as an intern doing risk assurance at PwC after graduation, she was promoted to full-time with the advisory side of the practice in February, where she helps build information risk management policies.

"In Advisory, we provide suggestions and help [clients] step-by-step build the plan and enact it," Zheng said. "We can actually see our recommendations come to real life. That's a really exciting moment."

She hopes to stay in the U.S. working for PwC, learning as much as possible and soaking up the city. Zheng's to-do list right now includes studying for her CISA (certified information systems auditor) certification and seeing as many Broadway shows as possible.

"A pathway for me is to learn everything I can, so I can better know what I want to do later," she said. "I've never lived in a city like New York before. I want to stay in New York to learn and experience everything."

Undaunted, Zheng is ready to face whatever the Big Apple and the world have to offer.

"I'm a warrior," she added seriously. "If the time comes, don't worry, I'll handle it. Whatever it is. With passion, courage and perseverance, I believe a bright future awaits!"