

# California graduate finds her path to helping others

By Penny Walker, ASU News  
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**Editor's note:** This story is part of a series of profiles of notable [spring 2026 graduates](#).

**By Amanda Loudin**

Jade Li admits that freshman and sophomore years left her feeling uncertain about her major, what she wanted to do after graduation and whether to pursue an advanced degree.

The San Diego native had always planned to become a clinical therapist, hoping to have a positive impact on others. She'll graduate with a Bachelor of Arts in [psychology](#) and a minor in [global studies](#). When the new graduate of [The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences](#) went abroad her junior year, she began to find clarity on what her career might look like.

"Studying in Singapore and Spain, I gained insight on how different cultures interact, and how they view the topic of mental health," she says. "It helped me pivot and determine that social work was the right path for me."

This fall, Li will head to Columbia University, where she'll pursue her Master of Science in social work. She credits her experience as a student at the consistently top-ranked [Barrett, The Honors College](#) for helping her prepare for this next big step.

"Barrett allowed me to become familiar with a discussion-based classroom, which will be similar to grad school," she says. "I also got to be part of the [@HEART Lab](#), which allowed me to further my interests in mental health and interpersonal dynamics."

Li also had the opportunity to intern in her field, working at Terros Health in Phoenix.

"I specialized in substance abuse and mental health for women," she says. "My tasks included clinical intakes and supporting group therapy sessions."

Put together, Li's wide range of experiences at ASU allowed her to move from an uncertain freshman to a self-assured graduate with a laser focus on the future.

Learn a bit more about Jade Li's ASU experience below.

**Question: What unwritten lesson are you taking away from ASU?**

**Answer:** You do not need to fit in with the dominant stereotypes. It's OK to be yourself and you should embrace your uniqueness.

**Q: Favorite spot on campus?**

**A:** Palm Walk, Noble Library and the Memorial Union.

**Q: What advice would you offer younger students?**

**A:** Do not be afraid to fail. Try things outside of your comfort zone or that you find daunting. They are the best ways to learn.

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*This story originally appeared on [ASU News](#).*

**Text image(s)**



Jade Li, who is earning a bachelor's degree in psychology, hopes to have a positive impact on others. Courtesy photo