



“A Hinrich scholar tries to be in someone else’s shoes – to embrace other viewpoints, cultures and ideas.”

Jean Shen, Customer Engineer, Mode Analytics
Hong Kong Baptist University, BAIJS '05
Thunderbird School of Global Management, MBA '10

“Success for me is to have a positive influence on those around me – on my family, my kids, co-workers and even strangers on the street. It is important to me that I set the right example for my kids to emulate.”

Jean Shen believes in happiness being a part and parcel of success. Her positivity builds a vibrant energy field around her and touches everyone who meets her.

Jean’s academic journey has been like a mosaic. It is made up of many parts, every bit shiny and distinctive, and yet cohesive with her Asian roots.

“I was studying at the Guangdong University of Foreign Studies when I applied for the Hinrich Foundation Global Trade Leader Scholarship” Jean said. “I was one of the lucky people to have Hinrich Foundation award me with a full scholarship to finish my final two years at Hong Kong Baptist University (HKBU) where I graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in International Journalism Studies.

“Although I had to study away from my family, I took heart in the fact that my parents were very supportive of all my decisions, unlike many other Chinese parents.”

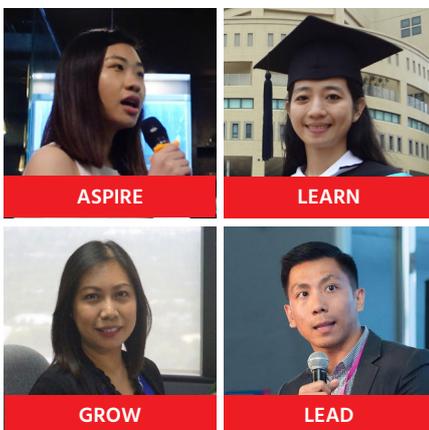
Embracing diversity

Adapting to the cosmopolitan environment in Hong Kong, and having classmates and peers from different places, she slowly started absorbing the diversity of cultures around her.

After graduation in 2005, she joined B2B eCommerce platform, Global Sources, as a Market Analyst.

After a 6-month training in Shenzhen, she relocated to the Qingdao office where she worked for two years. Jean said: “Studying at HKBU taught me how to see things with a different perspective and how to relate to people who

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belonged to diverse cultures and who were radically different from me. HKBU proved to be a good training ground for me to learn about diversity, a lesson I used while working for multicultural organizations like Global Sources, which facilitates trade among people in countries around the world. I cultivated better understanding of the global buyer community.”

As she progressed in her career with Global Sources, Jean realized she had to better equip herself to assume bigger roles, so she decided to pursue an MBA degree.



Jean (center in light brown pants) gamely poses with Hinrich Foundation team members, scholars and alumni during a scholar welcome event in Hong Kong, April 2012

In 2007, she applied for Thunderbird School of Global Management (now a part of Arizona State University) and was granted a scholarship offered by the Thunderbird Alumni Fund for Asian Students and the Hinrich Foundation.

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“Since the program I was taking at Thunderbird was focused on international management, students came from all over the globe, including Canada, Mexico, Peru, India, Thailand, Russia, Japan, South Korea, Turkey, Malaysia and the Philippines,” Jean said.

“My experiences in the US had a huge impact on my life, particularly after seeing how everyone is treated equally despite differences in race and culture. As I learned to appreciate other cultures, somewhere along the road, I learned to appreciate my own culture as well.”

Jean said she learned the most important lesson of all: That respect was the key to most human interactions. She realized that if she could put her feet into other people’s shoes, what seemed alien to her culture would become easy to understand. She became receptive to different ideas and values of those around her.

Gaining traction

Upon returning to Global Sources as a management trainee, Jean was stationed in Singapore for six months where she engaged in projects aiming to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of Global Sources Online, which would result in generating sales leads among suppliers and buyers. Under the supervision of

then Deputy COO Peter Zapf, she learned management's three-fold strategy: Identify actions to take; Prioritize the actions before executing them, and; Measure the outcome of those actions.

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"I am a person who thrives on challenges, responsibilities and opportunities," Jean said. *"My niche is being able to continually develop my business acumen, cross-cultural communication skills, quick adaptation of new technologies and being a life-long learner."*



Jean (3rd from left) with the Private Sourcing Event team at the Global Sources Hong Kong Trade Show, October 2009

Jean also had an opportunity to lead the Global Sources Private Sourcing Events team in Shenzhen to help international top retailers find the right suppliers. She arranged productive meetings for buyers, which sourced the right vendors and suppliers from China, the Philippines, Vietnam and other developing Asia economies. It was a win-win situation for the suppliers too, as new business opportunities were created for them, thus propagating global trade.

"The opportunity that the Hinrich Foundation and Global Sources gave me had a huge impact on my academic journey, and, in a broader perspective, business communities. I am grateful that I had the privilege of contributing in an international environment and in small ways that helped bring about trade that improved many underprivileged lives in developing economies."

Life-long learner

When she took time off to focus on personal life, Jean planned to learn coding. She did not plan to be a programmer but got hooked to the technology in a big way.

"In early 2018, coding was just something fun for me to use to step into the tech world. But as I learn more about coding and the tech community behind it, I realize that the technology field is very dynamic and comprises all the new things that I am really passionate about and excited to learn," Jean said.

Ever the learner, Jean envisions herself amid new technologies and new learnings in the future. Currently employed as a Customer Engineer at Mode

“I think right now is a winning moment in my career: I am able to maintain a strong work-life balance. I have a happy family, my husband has always been very supportive, and I am a mother of two boys. I am happy and productive working in a very collaborative environment. Because of the flexible and family-friendly culture of Mode, I can do great work and spend quality time with my kids and family.”

Analytics based in New York, Jean leverages her technical skills in JavaScript, CSS, HTML, SQL, Python and API to provide customers, who are usually data analysts or data scientists, with solutions for using Mode tools in their business analysis. It helps streamline analyst workflows and makes it possible to share insightful and actionable data across organizations.

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Seamless collaboration

Jean believes that she has worked with great teams at Global Sources and with her current team at Mode.

“Both teams share a common trait – an open, supportive and motivating environment. Teamwork makes the dream work! I can do things you cannot, you can do things I cannot; together we can do great things. This is a quote I like so much, and I strongly feel the same way while working at both teams at different times of my life,” Jean said.



Jean (front row, 4th from left) with her friends and classmates at Thunderbird's Asia Cultural Night, Fall 2007

“Everyone that I have met and learned from had an input in my journey. I believe that they touched my life for a reason. My parents who were extremely supportive of my decisions, and Hinrich Foundation and Global Sources for helping me find my niche, supporting my academic journey, and helping me acquire diverse skills in a multicultural environment.”

Jean believes in people, and how diverse human interactions can build life skills that can shape a person's decisions and success.

Proactive vs. passive

To inspire future Hinrich scholars, Jean quotes Steve Jobs: “Stay hungry. Stay foolish. Always.” Unlike Jobs though, she believes in life-long learning for scholars.

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“Being a learner ensures that you stay young, and energetic and you are not left behind. My experience says that as a Hinrich Foundation scholar, we need to be open and flexible to new things, and to maintain a level of positive energy in personal and professional life.” She advocates curiosity and a proactive approach to lifelong learning.



Jean (left) poses with her classmates during their Thunderbird MBA Graduation Ceremony, Spring 2009

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"I am a soldier who helps drive positive change in the industry to improve work environment."

Ramzan Miah
Plant Engineer,
VF Asia Limited,
Bangladesh

Hinrich Foundation alumnus
Hong Kong Baptist University
MS in Manufacturing
Systems Engineering '15



"It is my responsibility to improve my circumstances and myself, and then support family, society and community to improve their circumstances."

Roger Li
Gadget Labs,
Founder

Hinrich Foundation alumnus
Thunderbird School of Global
Management, MBA '11



"Success for me is following the passion I've always had, doing the kind of work that has never been done before, and breaking new grounds!"

Juliet Shwe Gaung
Myanmar Private Equity
And Venture Capital
Association (MPE&VCA),
Project Manager

Hinrich Foundation alumna
Hong Kong Baptist University
Masters in International
Journalism Studies, 2012



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