

Member of the Month – Christine Li-Auyeung

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Meet the January 2019 FWA Member of the Month and see what she is doing in the Financial community.

Please tell us about your FWA journey so far!

Absolutely, and it's a fascinating story actually: I joined the FWA after meeting with Marietta Bottero, a fellow FWA member who is currently Co-Chair for the [FWA Member to Member Mentoring program](#).

Back then, I was a student at Baruch College and co-launched the Wall Street Careers Program, which later re-branded as the Financial Leadership Program. We started this initiative because we realized that many students at Baruch were like myself: from a diverse background, being the first generation in their family to go to College and eager to have a career in Financial Services.



Since Baruch is not an Ivy League school with employers automatically coming our way, we gathered resumes of students who applied and were selected and reached out to the Heads of HR in various organizations, including BMO Capital Markets. That's how I met with Marietta as she was Head of their HR department. Not only did we immediately 'click' when we met, she became my mentor, friend and of course, invited me to join the FWA!

My involvement with the FWA has been around our education-related initiatives: I am currently a mentor for the Member to Member Mentoring Program which is in its second year, and a decade-long mentor of the College Mentoring Program at Baruch. In addition, I chair the [FWA Graduate School Partnership Committee](#) since it was launched in 2015. The Committee offers an opportunity for graduate level students in the NY Metro area to jump-start their professional careers through a series of on-campus workshops on professional skills training and leadership development.

You volunteer with other organizations: what sets the FWA apart?

Its legacy! I love the story behind the FWA and the fact that it was founded after a group of women working in Finance were denied admission to an all-male investment organization. Muriel Siebert, one of the FWA's founding members, was the first woman to purchase a seat at

the NY Stock Exchange back in 1967!

This story is unique and completely sets the FWA apart.

Tell us about your career.

I studied Accounting and Computer Information Systems as an Undergrad and worked in Public Accounting at PwC as a Systems Auditor. I had a passion for IT and knew that technology was going to play a key role in the future of Finance (I was reading a lot about cybersecurity as a student). However, while at PwC, I realized that I wanted to do Asset Management and a recruiter spoke to me about [StoneCastle Partners](#). At the time, the firm was a start up focusing on taking institutional cash and putting it into community banks.

At first, I focused on accounting and product development, then moved into operations and now I am focusing on project management and strategic initiatives.

How did you move from day-to-day responsibilities to a more strategic role?

In order to progress with my career, I knew that it was important to move into a more strategic role and focus less on the daily tasks. I therefore decided to do an Executive MBA Program at Oxford University which helped me learn more about the bigger picture.

Tell us about your experience doing an Executive MBA.

It was amazing: all my degrees have been technical in nature, so I was looking for a program that would help me transition professionally to a more strategic mindset. I visited several universities in the USA and at the end I listened to my gut: after going to an '[Inspiring Women](#)' event in NYC hosted by the University of Oxford Saïd Business School, I loved the event and the Professor who was giving the lecture. Then one thing led to the other and I applied for the Executive MBA Program and was accepted.

One challenging part was telling my employer because the program involved traveling and going to campus, thus taking me away from the office. My mentor really helped me throughout the negotiation process.

Being part of an Executive MBA program actually helped me on the job because it was very practical and it allowed me to apply what I learned in the classroom immediately back at work.

Although it was challenging to balance personal, academic and professional life, it all worked out and I would do it all over again in a heartbeat!

Tell us about your passion behind mentoring.

As a first generation in my family to go to University, I realized that it is important to be able to know people who are ahead of you who and see the pitfalls and bring awareness at the same time. With my personal background, I didn't have easy access to this kind of awareness. So, mentoring has played a significant part in my personal and professional life.

Who is a source of inspiration and strength in your life and why?

I am really inspired by my grandmother's story: at the age of 16, she swam from Mainland China to Hong Kong after World War II. She had nothing and started selling things on the street and that's how she met my grandfather. She then focused on taking care of the family and was widowed. So, she took over my grandfather's business and became quite successful as she was very entrepreneurial and independent.

When I think about her story, it is very inspiring because she had no fear.

What are the top three takeaways learned from your experiences so far?

- Stay flexible
- Be open
- Aim to make a difference

Do you have any book to recommend our FWA community?

How to Win Friends and Influence Others by Dale Carnegie. A classic with lots of good advice on building relationships.

Previous Member of the Month