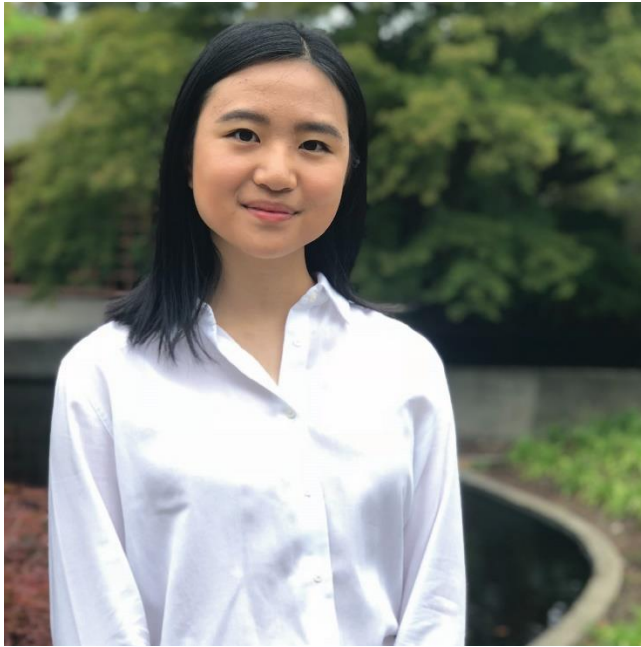




## WORK LEARN | SUMMER 2021



Michelle Lam, 5<sup>th</sup> Year, Arts  
*WL S21 Communications & Engagement Assistant, UBC  
Community Engagement*

I applied for this Work Learn position because the two major foci of the job, communications and community engagement, aligned with my skills and interests — I was thrilled that such a position existed. As an Arts Co-op student, I previously had the opportunity to work in a technical support position at a local college where I developed my communication, organizational, and problem-solving skills, which were critical to my Work Learn position.

Through Arts Co-op, I became interested in working in the non-profit sector but had not had the chance to do so yet. While working at Community Engagement I was able to move closer towards this goal by working directly with local non-profit organizations, facilitating conversations between UBC units and community partners to learn about their goals.

The writing skills I developed as an Arts student were essential for both the communications and community engagement sides of my position. The equity and inclusion lens that I have developed through my studies, and which I continue to grow, has also been key in building reciprocal relationships with community partners.

Since my Work Learn position was during the summer term, I worked 20 hours per week from May to August in addition to taking one course per term. I was able to balance my position with my academics through strategically planning a work and study schedule. Determining an ideal schedule, based on my personal preferences and productivity levels, was vital in helping me achieve a sense of well-being and I appreciate that my supervisors were flexible in this regard.

One of the most fascinating areas that I learned about during my term was learning about how the university functions at a broader level, including the organizational structure. I think I learned more about how UBC operates during the first month of my position than in five years as a student! Learning about the strategic plan and understanding the goals and vision of the university has given me a new perspective on why certain decisions are made by the university. This was one of the most surprising and valuable pieces of learning and one reason I would recommend Work Learn to any student.

In terms of the more practical skills, knowledge of communications, including web design, storytelling, and social media are some skills that I think will be helpful for a variety of future positions. Learning about how UBC builds reciprocal relationships with community groups, with the purpose of creating a more equitable and just world, and contributing to these initiatives, was another key learning outcome for me that will continue to guide me in my future work.