

## Back of the Yards Student Achieves Dream to Pursue Engineering

*Amy Wu will enter the engineering program at University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign this Fall*

Living nearly 8,000 miles from her parents for more than three years hasn't stopped Amy Wu from making history.

Wu, a Brighton Park resident and Back of the Yards College Prep High School senior, is the school's first student ever to be accepted directly



into the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign's prestigious engineering program.

Wu, who lives with her aunt and uncle in Chicago and whose parents reside about 7,800 miles away in Zhuhai, China, said she's thrilled to head to Illinois. The university's engineering program is ranked sixth in the country by U.S. News and World Report.

"I feel pretty proud of myself," said Wu, who has a 3.95 grade-point average on a 4.0 scale. "I'm looking forward to college because I know I'll be able to learn a lot."

Wu credited Bottom Line Chicago for helping her achieve her college dreams.

Founded in Boston 20 years ago, Bottom Line's Chicago office opened nearly four years ago and the students in the program have a college persistence rate of over 90 percent. This year the program is serving more than 1,000 students in Chicago, with a wait list of 500 students. Wu's Bottom Line counselor, Adam Lindemulder, helped her find colleges that fit her needs, fill out applications and edited scholarship essays. Wu said, without Bottom Line and Lindemulder, she would have had major difficulty navigating the college application process. Lindemulder said Bottom Line will continue to support Wu while she attends University of Illinois as well.

She also is the first student in Bottom Line's history to be directly accepted into the U of I's engineering program.

"What impresses me most about Amy, outside of her academic achievements, is simply the determination and follow through she has had to succeed in engineering in college," Lindemulder said. "In addition to participating in summer engineering programs at universities like Notre Dame and UIUC, she has been determined to succeed even while her parents are thousands of miles away in China.

I know that this perseverance will continue to drive her to find and secure opportunities to grow as an engineering student at UIUC."

Wu was introduced to Bottom Line through directed outreach at Chinatown's Pui Tak Center. She has been working with Lindemulder since September 2017.

Wu and her mother moved to Chicago in 2015. Her mother returned to China a few months later to reside with Wu's father and her younger brother. Wu hasn't seen her family since winter break but routinely

talks to them via FaceTime. Wu also said her mother plans to attend her June 9 graduation from Back of the Yards College Prep High School.

“Sometimes I feel homesick, but my aunt and uncle treat me very well,” said Wu, who lives with her aunt and uncle and their three younger children.

At Back of the Yards College Prep High School, where 96 percent of the 790 total students are economically disadvantaged – according to U.S. News and World Report – Wu has shined academically. This year, she’s been an unofficial teacher’s assistant for her peers in calculus. Wu is not sure where her engineering major will take her on her career path. But she does know she loves studying and living in the United States.

“There are so many things I have yet to explore,” Wu said. “Being here is the best fit for me.”

For more information on Bottom Line in Chicago, visit <https://www.bottomline.org/content/chicago>