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ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF CIVIL ENGINEERING AND ENGINEERING MECHANICS
COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY IN THE CITY OF NEW YORK



NHON
APPRENTICE

2020 UNDERGRADUATE
APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM



WAICHING
MENTOR

WHAT IS THE MOST IMPORTANT PART OF THE MENTOR RELATIONSHIP?

NHON: The vast knowledge of the mentors on their research and studies is astonishing. They provide a strong foundation and support for mentees to explore new topics and conduct research. In addition, their desire for us to succeed is motivating.

WAICHING: Seeing my students learn and grow intellectually is the most rewarding part of my job. It makes me proud that many of the former PhD students I taught are now enjoying their own success. Now, they are much more knowledgeable than me in their respective fields!

ADVICE TO A STUDENT, JUST BEGINNING TO CONSIDER A CAREER IN SCIENCE?

NHON: Rather than letting the unknowns stop you from proceeding further, make them a reason to proceed. Instead of avoiding an unknown, in my case machine learning, I chose to confront it, which led me to a door that previously I did not know existed: graduate study.

WAICHING: Be proactive; actively ask for research opportunities, find mentors who appreciate your work, improve your skills and don't saturate your schedule with a lot of meetings.

WHAT GOT YOU INTERESTED IN THIS FIELD?

NHON: After witnessing the erection of numerous buildings and bridges, I developed a passion for civil engineering and engineering mechanics. Whether it is by providing valuable information regarding the structures or directly designing and constructing them, I want to be involved in shaping the structures of our society.

WAICHING: I love solving problems and drawing. My research area is a combination of both where we convert our understanding of the world into equations, models and computer codes that allow others to see how we see the world.