



Tijana Zrnic, The 2017-2018 Open Gateway Fellow at International House, UC Berkeley



Tijana Zrnic was born and raised in Novi Sad, Serbia, and is a first-year Ph.D. student in Electrical Engineering and Computer Sciences. Wanting to use mathematical tools to solve practical problems, she chose communications and signal processing as the focus of her undergraduate studies, as she believed such a program would provide her with eclectic research opportunities.

Prior to coming to Berkeley, she got her BEng at the University of Novi Sad, Serbia, in 2017. During her studies, she became increasingly interested in machine learning, and is hoping to do research in this area while at Berkeley. As an undergraduate student, she was active in promoting higher education in Serbia through different organizations at her university.

As for her non-academic interests, she likes volleyball and languages. She believes the I-House experience will broaden her horizons, and is excited to learn about different cultures of the world during her stay.

From her Nomination:

Tijana will graduate from Novi Sad University in Serbia with a perfect 10/10 GPA. Additionally, she has numerous publications and spent a summer at Caltech as a Summer Undergraduate Research Fellow (SURF). Prof. Babak Hassabi at Caltech was her advisor during her summer there and writes, “Over the course of my time at Caltech I have hosted some 40-50 SURF students (itself a highly select group) and Tijana is easily within the top 5% of this cohort. She is very smart, inquisitive, hard-working and mathematically gifted. I would put her on par with the very strongest graduate students I have seen at Caltech and Stanford (the two places where I have taught and extensively interacted with students). Her social skills are strong and she has healthy interests outside of academia.”

From her Personal Statement:

I believe a school like UC Berkeley would allow me to show my full potential and grow as a scientist in a fruitful research environment. I was fortunate enough to grow up in surroundings which were founded on equal opportunities for everyone, regardless of gender, race, nationality or religion. As a result, I became open-minded, learned to appreciate diversity and never questioned if I belonged in higher education. Still, I have always known that not everyone is as lucky. Wanting to help out people of all backgrounds, I joined the Marketing Team of my faculty as a student-promoter, informing high school students from different places in Serbia and the region about my university and faculty, encouraging them to pursue higher education and helping them apply.



The Open Gateway Fellowship was established by multiple donors to support a term endowment fund for US or international first-year incoming Ph.D. student with demonstrated financial need.