



A PERFECT SCORE

Ashley Chandler was the College of Science & Mathematics' top graduating senior in 2013-14 — a 4.0 GPA is tough to beat.

Originally from Mandeville, La., near New Orleans, Chandler had a goal when she arrived at Cal Poly. "I wanted to be an actuary since day one," she said. Actuaries calculate risk and premiums for insurance benefits.

By the end of her junior year, Chandler had passed two of the tests necessary to become an actuary. The field appealed to her because it combines the analytical skills of mathematics with her interest in working with people, a talent she honed as vice chair of the University Union Advisory Board for ASI student government.

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"I think ASI is in large part responsible for all the soft skills I've gained," Chandler said. "My position combined learning how to collaborate with people, learning people's work styles, and learning how to manage a team."

Following graduation, Chandler joined Mercer, a human resources consulting firm in San Francisco, as an employee health and benefits actuary. She credits Cal Poly with helping her land the job. Through Cal Poly connections, she was invited to apply for and won an internship with Mercer the summer following her junior year. The company appreciated Chandler's ability to communicate complex ideas, a skill she had developed doing student-faculty research in

the Mathematics Department the previous summer.

Chandler worked with Professor Linda Patton and fellow mathematics major Shelby Burnett on proofs regarding the symmetry of a certain numerical range. She then had the opportunity to present her work at MathFest, a conference organized by the Mathematical Association of America. "It was the first time that I've ever needed to communicate a math proof. It was a really valuable experience that provided me with the technical communication skills needed to succeed as an actuarial consultant," Chandler said.

"Ashley's rare combination of mathematical talent and work ethic made her the ideal student," said Patton. "But I was most impressed that Ashley is as much fun to work with as she is intelligent and reliable."

Chandler is a big fan of her alma mater. "I'm happy to brag on Cal Poly. I think coming to Cal Poly is one of the best decisions I've ever made." //