

YIHENG

BA Business and Economics

MA Digital Economy

My thesis topic was “Integrating sustainable awareness in the curriculum of Bachelor programs” – I kind of did a comparative study of some selected Chinese and European universities. What I noticed is that in the formal curriculums, there’s a lot of awareness about these topics. But then in reality, there’s only a brief discussion in one class – and everyone knows about climate change, so just maybe a two-hour class is way too brief to think about our relationship with the environment. What can we do as the younger generation to make changes, take action and solve the pain that we currently have regarding those disasters and resources?

The initial reason to study the BBE program was to understand how society works. Everyone has their own reasons and principles to do things, so I wanted to understand the functions of how society works. And also, why people behave in certain ways – this sounds like psychological stuff – but I think economics in a way explains the general things. Initially, I didn’t think about the environment. Then during the CBK, we had socio-economics and we touched upon the topic of climate change. That’s when I noticed that there was not enough focus on these things. In the beginning, I learnt about mainstream economic perspectives on climate change, but I wanted to know more. It confuses me – I know that we have climate change and disasters, and it just confuses me why they are happening now and why it wasn’t happening before. And what can we do about it? Because it’s a very urgent topic, actually.

I believe that the chemical stuff and so on, and anything in the natural sciences produces “hardcore facts” – but economic activities are the “moving targets”. They are what affects the chemical world and the chain of reactions causing us to perceive noise and air pollution – while the economic activities are always behind it. For example, lots of factories built in an area are what is causing the pollution we can observe now. Natural sciences let us observe, but to know what the reason behind these things is, we need to understand the economic activities taking place. That’s the hardcore reason why I want to study these complex topics that combine economics and the environment.

To me economics, in a simple way, it’s this really complex process of how our human civilizations have evolved so far. Back thousands of years ago, we were happy to be able to make fire with wood and right now we can do so much stuff. But the earth stays basically the same. The



resources are out there, and now we can utilize these resources in a kind of more productive way.

Now I’m doing a master’s in digital economy which is more on the business and administration side. Because everything is more or less digitalized, so I think I’ll dive into this direction. But sadly, in the master’s, sustainability-related topics weigh little in the curriculum; although we discuss the impacts of digital economy on the environment in some classes, the issues are not explored deeply or systematically. I won’t forget, but I hope the companies won’t forget, either. That’s the most important thing actually.