

SPOTLIGHT ON... *lacey long - vejár*

International Student Visa Specialist

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Share a special moment from

your travels: It's hard to pick just one! Hitchhiking in Guatemala, exploring the night markets in Taiwan, dog-sledding in Alaska, dangling off the Via Ferrata on Mount Kinabalu in Borneo, and getting married in Southern Chile (where my husband is from) are definitely standouts.

How do you spend your time

outside of work: I'm obviously passionate about traveling and exploring, but these days, my amazing two-year old daughter has my full attention when not at work.

Favorite local spot: For nature, hiking in Sequoia National Park—pick a lake on the map and head out! For fun, enjoying live music and food trucks at Gazebo Gardens in Fresno.

Where is a must-visit California

location: San Diego. The city has so many great neighborhoods to explore like Little Italy, North Park, Old Town and Hillcrest. And the number of beautiful beaches can't be beat! It is the quintessential Southern California city that still manages to be laid back (unlike its neighbor to the north, LA).



Final thoughts: Academics are the priority, but don't forget to get out and explore! Merced is perfectly located to see the many landscapes of California—and beyond. If you're ever in need of travel ideas, come see me or send an email. Or, if you have travel ideas for me to add to my bucket list, I'd love to hear them!



“ **Hometown:** Fresno, CA

Alma Mater: University of California, Los Angeles

How long have you worked at UC

Merced: I've been here two and a half years – I was lucky enough to be hired on after relocating back to California.

Where in the world have you

traveled: I'm proud to say I've visited 28 countries in Asia, the Americas and Europe. I even lived in Vietnam and Italy! A few countries I've visited that our students are also from include; Canada, France, Germany, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Italy, Malaysia, Mexico, Netherlands, Philippines, Portugal, South Korea, Spain, Taiwan, United Kingdom and Vietnam. Within the US, I've been to 34 of the 50 states.

Bucket list travel locations: I'd like to eat seafood at Zanzibar's Rock restaurant (perched on a rock in the Indian Ocean); bicycle around the Åland Islands between Sweden and Finland; hike the Tien Shan in Kazakhstan; admire the beauty of Petra in Jordan; watch glaciers calve in Greenland's Disko Bay... to name just a few.