

## Student Profile

### Aruhn Venkat – Management PhD Program



#### Your Time at UCI

What made you decide to pursue a graduate degree?

*Curiosity and a strong desire to make the world a better place. I wanted to better understand how the world works and why it works the way it does. I felt I needed to know more to make a difference in this world and a graduate degree was the perfect way to do so.*

Why did you choose to come to UCI?

*Quality of education and quality of life. The two go hand-in-hand. The beautiful weather makes me more optimistic and productive. For example, when I have a difficult problem to solve, I head down to the beach to clear my head and think deeply while listening to the waves. More importantly, UC Irvine's faculty are top-notch and care deeply about their students. I wanted to attend a program that developed my interests, honed my skillset and was ultimately vested in the outcome of my education. I can categorically say that UCI has exceeded all my expectations.*

If you are conducting research, how would you explain your research and its significance to your grandparent?

*I analyze how taxes affect corporate decisions. For example, we still don't know what corporations decide to do when they face taxes. With the new Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, these sorts of issues have gained substantial prominence. Are workers going to benefit? Are shareholders going to benefit? Are CEO's going to benefit? I have a paper that seeks to answer these very questions. We also don't fully understand corporate tax avoidance. Why do firms do it? What are the costs and benefits? Corporate tax avoidance remains an issue for governments and companies and I hope to understand its causes and consequences better.*

What are your hobbies/passions outside of research?

*My family, reading, sports, meditation and exercise. I believe that having a healthy mental, spiritual and physical life is the foundation for a successful academic career. And to me, a successful academic career helps make the world a better place.*

#### Reflections

What are you most proud of accomplishing (so far) in your graduate program?

*I received the Ray Watson fellowship for overall academic performance last year. That was an accomplishment that I look back on with relish. Academia tends to be a slow-moving world. We are often unrewarded for our efforts for long periods of time. The Fellowship was the recognition of my efforts and that was a welcome and wonderful feeling.*

What is your most memorable moment/experience at UCI to date?

*Submitting my first journal article. My advisor once told me that we have to celebrate every little step in academia because each step takes so much work. He could not have been more correct. When I submitted the manuscript, I felt a great sense of joy. I had worked very hard to help write the paper, help analyze the data and finally to do all the little things to get the paper ready for submission. Finally submitting the manuscript meant a lot to me.*

What advice do you have for a new graduate student in your program?

*For students in my program, I recommend changing your mindset about work, if you haven't already. Research is not "9-to-5." It requires constant thinking and attention – at all hours. That's not a bad thing! Enjoy the process! Getting to think, read and write in order to contribute to society's body of knowledge is a privilege, not a chore. So embrace the lifestyle, think of it as fun and don't try to fight it.*

### **Career**

What do you see yourself doing in five or ten years?

*I see myself as a researcher, working hard to help society better understand corporate taxation. I also see myself teaching and, hopefully, inspiring students at all levels to love learning, just as I do. Additionally, I hope to serve on several academic committees to build a better institution. Finally and just as importantly, I see myself intimately involved with low-income taxpayer clinics to help decipher the tax code to those who are not trained in taxation.*

How do you hope to make a difference?

*Researching, teaching and serving. By researching, I hope I can assist policymakers in understanding corporate and business taxation. By teaching, I hope I can inspire my students to learn as much as possible and to have successful careers. By serving, I hope I can improve the functioning of my institution and the lives of those less fortunate than me.*