Student Profile
Javier Orraca – Master of Science in Business Analytics

Your Time at UCI

What made you decide to pursue a graduate degree?

A graduate degree is differentiating in today's competitive job market, and I wanted to empower myself with the most current data science concepts, theories, and tools. I also wanted to demonstrate to potential employers how serious I am about adding value to organizations using data-driven decision making and advanced business analytics.

Why did you choose to come to UCI?

UCI and the MSBA program represent the nexus of higher education in Southern California. I spent a lot of time researching the pros and cons of similar programs. UCI's careful development of the MSBA curriculum, Capstone project and career services were clear differentiators… and who doesn't love OC!

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

My grandparents have no concept of the internet or the magnitude of "big data" (they're almost 100!), granted, they were avid readers their whole lives. My research would require statistical analysis and manipulation of large data sets, so I would try to first compare my grandparents' book collection (small in scale) to all the books in the world (massive scale). I would further explain how technology has progressed to allow us to analyze data sets with hundreds of billions of data points as opposed to the small-scale tables they grew up studying.

What are your hobbies/passions outside of research?

I love photography, the beach and sun, going to the gym, comfort food cooking and good conversation with friends. I love all kinds of live music too, just not country music!

Reflections

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

There are lots of great opportunities for self-analysis. We were asked to film each other during team presentations (and as individuals) and I found that there is always room for improvement. Throughout my career, I frequently presented to internal leadership and external client executives, but I never realized how unprofessional I sounded using "umm" or "uhh" as fillers, even momentarily. These observations let me correct a behavior that had gone unnoted for over a decade!

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

I'm humbled by the camaraderie that developed between classmates in such a short time. My classmates are as motivated and excited about UCI and the MSBA program as I am, and everyone is willing to help each other however possible. It was a nice surprise to see how diverse our class is and how well we get along.

Career

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

I hope to be leading a data analytics team in five to ten years, one that empowers me to be creative and support numerous organizations within the company. I hope to develop or join a flat-organization, one where my teammates are objective, transparent, continuously learning and not afraid to propose outside-the-box ideas. In five to ten years, I hope to be a business analytics leader who has mastered storytelling and visualizations, and who is able to make the complex simple.

How do you hope to make a difference?

I hope to be a valuable resource for my future employer and the larger data science community, even for people interested in pursuing a degree in business / data analytics. It's so important for us to share best practices and educate each other whenever possible. I don't hesitate one bit when I need to seek the advice of a subject matter expert and I hope others do the same with me - I'm resourceful as hell and it's my pleasure to help.