

Student Profile

Sifat Reazi – Planning, Policy, and Design PhD Program



Your Time at UCI

What made you decide to pursue a graduate degree?

Fundamentally, it was the gentle but persistent reminder my parents gave me growing up of the value of education. My parents, immigrants from Bangladesh, received their Master's before coming to the U.S. -- the experience was formative for them. As I grew older, I was convinced of its ability to open doors.

My bachelors in Global Studies highlighted the socio-political issues of the world, however, graduated jaded feeling like there were zero solutions within reach. This feeling eventually stoked a desire to explore these lingering questions more seriously – I knew I wanted to do this in graduate school.

Why did you choose to come to UCI?

As a Master's student, the mentorship and guidance I received from Dr. Richard Matthew and Dr. Seth Pipkin were invaluable. My academic experiences during that time left me excited about what I would be able to do at UCI and the ways I could deeply engage with my field. I applied to a few PhD programs throughout California though I really just wanted to continue at UCI.

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

It is difficult to explain my research to others when, as an incoming second-year, I feel I am sorting it out myself. My overarching aspiration is to be a part of improving the ways NGO's (i.e. the humanitarian sector) implement services (i.e. humanitarian action). More specifically, I want to explore the ways technology can be harnessed to help them do that.

What are your hobbies/passions outside of research?

I have a toddler who is a wonderful reprieve from academia so outside of research I "mom". But I also enjoy making things, whether it's sewing, embroidery, or painting, the process of making things intrigue me.

Reflections

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

Be easy on yourself because it's OK to be tentative. That is, it is OK to not have your dissertation question confirmed in year one! This took me a while to understand and weighed heavy on me for a while. Try to enjoy the process of learning to conduct research and explore your interests deeply—this will naturally lead to the clarity you need to formalize a question (this is what I tell myself).

Career

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

Five: Dotting the "i's" and crossing the "t's" of my dissertation.

Ten: Working at an international humanitarian organization; researching/implementing novel and impactful approaches to service delivery.