

WACO YOKOYAMA

BST Alumna 2015

“Pursuing your curiosities will direct you to where you will thrive.”

-Waco Yokoyama

This principle has guided Waco Yokoyama and let her develop a multidisciplinary approach to her studies which has, in turn, provided her with the opportunity to excel in all aspects of her academic career. From achieving first-class honours at the University of Dundee to earning a full scholarship to study her masters degree in Environmental Change and Management at the University of Oxford, Waco’s achievements show us the significance of pursuing one’s curiosities.

During her formative years at BST, Waco always pursued a broad and varied range of interests. Waco was part of the swim, football and volleyball teams, and her passion for sports has continued throughout her life as she is now a qualified swim coach and lifeguard and also takes part in rowing at Oxford University. Her A-level subject selection of English Literature, Psychology and Biology reveals some early threads of her multidisciplinary background and well illustrates her integrative approach to her studies. According to Waco, BST “equipped [her] with the skill of being adaptable” which combined with her interdisciplinary background has allowed her to excel in her studies.

Waco was able to build on the solid academic skills she developed at BST during her years at the University of Dundee. These years of higher study reveal Waco’s excellent work ethic and her ability to balance both her academic and personal life. Alongside her studies, Waco juggled two part-time jobs and worked to publish a documentary. Despite having lots on her plate, Waco shined, achieving first-class honours and two academic awards: the Joan Laing English Award for achieving the highest first class in the English Department and the Scots Philosophical Association Award for being the top philosophy student. On top of receiving these 3 awards for academic distinction, Waco’s dissertation, “The Ontology of Childhood in Cinema”, was graded as Highly Commended and was published by the Global Undergraduate Award. Her outstanding achievements reveal to us the importance of maintaining a variety of interests while continuing to sustain a strong work ethic.

Following her undergraduate studies, Waco received a full scholarship to the University of Oxford, where she currently studies a range of subjects from climate science to law, economics and governance. Even while tackling a range of interests, Waco stressed the importance of pursuing and engaging in them deeply.



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Waco's current research focuses on Climate Smart Mining in response to a recent World Bank report on this matter. Her research focuses on lithium mining in Europe and South America. Waco says that "moving from the arts to sciences entailed a new discipline but was nothing out of [her] capacity" due to the interdisciplinary skill set she has built throughout her academic career. It is clear that Waco's versatile approach to matters is what drives her academic success.

Although earning scholarships to the University of Dundee or the University of Oxford are nonetheless impressive accomplishments, Waco mentioned that her proudest achievement is her ability to have pursued and excelled in both arts and sciences: two major fields that don't often come together. Waco is currently taking on responsibilities alongside her studies as a lead sustainability consultant and researcher.

Looking ahead, Waco has also received offers to study further masters courses and wishes to continue pursuing her interests by carrying out further research in the environmental area. Waco's experiences are a very good example to students of the importance to embrace their curiosities and continuously show determination to pursue their interests. If you follow your heart, the head will follow.

Article written by BST Year 10 student, Mei Hague (April 2021)

