

News Release

Junior Henry Soung Focused on Communication and all that Jazz

By Elizabeth Tollefson on Sunday, January 1, 2017

Music might be his minor, but it has played a major role in the life of Junior Henry Soung. The communication major from St. Paul, Minn., grew up playing piano, and while he left it as a teenager, it is once again an important part of his life.

When he originally arrived at the University of Minnesota Crookston as a post-secondary enrollment option student, he was interested in natural resources. While his first year on campus he spent taking generals, he also took an introductory class in the major and realized it might not be a fit for him. "I discovered that my interest was more on the hobby side and not on the career side of natural resources," Soung says.



Like many college students, he discussed his options with friends and staff members, and they recommended he look at the liberal arts. "I took classes in communication, and I knew right away these were classes that I was not only interested in, but that I could apply to life," he says. "They were also classes I wanted to attend and learn more."

One of his favorites was his persuasion class taught by his advisor Professor Mark Huglen. Meeting Suong, it seems a natural fit for him to be a communication major, but he says presenting and speaking were not always easy.

"My classes in organizational communication and business and professional speaking really pushed me to become a better public speaker," Soung says. "I believe those two classes improved my presenting and communication skills ten-fold."

Soung also communicates through his music. Playing piano, with a penchant for jazz, has once again taken center stage in his life. "I started piano lessons when I was about five and I continued until my early teens," Soung recalls. "I stopped because I thought I had taken enough music lessons, but years later, I found myself regretting that decision and missing that part of my life so I am back at the keyboard."

He also enjoys organizing and competing in intramural volleyball, serving as treasurer of the Multicultural International Club, and tutoring ESL students when they need him. For Soung, Hmong is his second language, but in the spring, he hopes to add Japanese to his list. He will be studying abroad in Japan spending spring semester in Tokyo. "I love new cultures, new perspectives, and of course, the food," he smiles.

One of his long-term goals is to become proficient in Japanese and perhaps work there. He has decided that he wants to work outside of the United States but his exact dream job has yet to be discovered.

Growing up, Soung enjoyed fishing with his mother who would take him down to the docks to fish along the river. His love of fishing is probably one of the reasons he wanted to originally major in natural resources and the thing that brought him to the University of Minnesota Crookston.

He says his best experiences on campus involve working with international students and helping them get involved. "It has given me the opportunity to meet people who are not from here and who grew up much differently than I did as a Minnesotan," he says. But, his friendships and the interactions with students from around the world encouraged him and his desire to study abroad.

Soung will graduate in spring 2018 and complete his undergraduate education but for Soung learning is a natural part of living and his curiosity will go on long after his formal education ends.

The University of Minnesota Crookston now delivers 34 bachelor's degree programs, 22 minors, and 40 areas of emphasis on campus as well as 14 degree programs entirely online. These degrees are offered in the areas of agriculture and natural resources; business; liberal arts and education; and math, science and technology. With an enrollment of 1,800 undergraduates from more than 20 countries and 40 states, the Crookston campus offers a supportive, close-knit atmosphere that leads to a prestigious University of Minnesota degree. "Small Campus. Big Degree." To learn more, visit www.umcrookston.edu.

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