Ling (Kelly) He '17

Degree: Bachelor's in data science
Data science concentration area:
Computer science, statistics, and mathematics
Hometown: Hangzhou, China

When Ling (Kelly) He '17 arrived at Rochester, she was thinking about majoring in economics or math. But she also became interested in the concept of "big data"—the huge data assets generated by digital life that can reveal important patterns. When she learned that the University was kicking off a new program, she wasted no time in signing up. Now she's a double major in data science and mathematics, with a minor in Spanish.

Last summer, He began doing research under Jiebo Luo, an associate professor of computer science with expertise in data mining, machine learning, and other areas of investigation for data science. The project to which she contributed used data collected from social media to connect students who aren't interested in STEM—science, technology, engineering, and mathematics—with people who could nurture their curiosity.

"It's amazing how you can make use of resources to find a pattern, or do something for the social good or for other applications in real life," He says.

She didn't know much about issues surrounding STEM education when she first joined the project, but now, she says, she's "more passionate about it" than she ever thought she would be. "I can see the power of data science because I know more about it."

DATA-DRIVEN: "I can see the power of data science because I know more about it," says He of her first year in the program, during which she contributed to research using social media data to connect students with mentors who can pique their curiosity about science, technology, engineering, and math.

This summer she has an internship in New York City with business-management consulting firm Ernst & Young, in a technology-advisory program of the company's financial services office.

"There's a lot to learn. It's a new field with a lot coming out really quickly. It's very fast-paced. Sometimes it can be overwhelming because we're still learning the basic techniques. It can be overwhelming—but that's what keeps you learning and going forward."