

# Katelyn Horstman

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## Education:

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### Rejected undergraduate institutions:

- UC Berkeley (waitlist)
- Stanford
- Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT)
- Harvard
- A few other schools I have probably forgotten about...

### Rejected graduate institutions:

- Caltech\*
- University of Michigan (waitlist)
- UC Berkeley
- University of Texas at Austin (UT Austin)
- Northwestern
- University of Arizona
- Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT)
- Stanford

\*See the next page to read about my rejection from Caltech

## Rejected REUs/Fellowships/Awards:

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### Undergraduate:

- REUs (Research Experiences for Undergraduates)
  - UCLA summer research program (internal)
  - Northwestern CIERA REU (waitlist/rejection)
  - Northern Arizona University REU
  - UT Austin REU
  - UC Santa Barbara REU
  - Carnegie Observatories REU
  - University of Hawaii, Institute of Astronomy REU
- Fellowships/Awards
  - Barry Goldwater Fellowship
  - NSF GRFP (honorable mention)
  - The Hertz Foundation
  - The Dean's Prize for Excellence in Research Award

### Graduate:

- Fellowships/Awards
  - The Christine Mirzayan Science & Technology Policy Graduate Fellowship Program
  - Ford Foundation Fellowship
  - Caltech Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Outreach Fellowship (internal)

## Rejection from Caltech:

When I initially applied to Caltech's graduate program, I was rejected. After being rejected, a friend of mine who was in the graduate program reached out to me to talk. I mentioned to her that I had other great options for graduate school, but that my partner was taking a job in Los Angeles and I would really prefer to live with him during graduate school. She suggested that I could talk to an advisor at Caltech about a post-baccalaureate position, or a position doing research for a full year, and then reapply to Caltech in the fall. At the time, this sounded like a great option, as I was in no rush to start my degree and would have an extra year to figure out my living situation. I talked to folks at Caltech and started filling out paperwork to become a post-bacc researcher in the fall of 2021.

However, about two weeks after the SIR (statement of intent to register) deadline, I was contacted by the head of the admissions committee at Caltech to discuss my future plans. Much to my surprise, he offered me admission to Caltech saying that, "we often have so many great candidates apply that a few end up slipping through the cracks."

The point of explaining my Caltech admission story is that oftentimes it is easy to misinterpret a journey when you can only see the end. From the outside, it may seem like I was admitted to every graduate school I applied to and picked Caltech from my infinite options. In reality, it was a combination of circumstance, resources, and good luck that helped me get into this particular program - as it is with most graduate programs, even if you are qualified!