

## Stepping Stones to the Future

When I first gave some thought to what I wanted for a career, I knew that I wanted to involve myself in research. That choice was reinforced with every project I undertook and worked on. But the path ahead seemed unclear in a competitive world recovering from a pandemic. It was at this point that I received an email informing me that I was being offered the Justus and Louise van Effen Excellence scholarship. The path that seemed so confusing suddenly led straight to TU Delft.

The days that followed were a whirlwind of activity, and I soon reached Delft. From the very first day, I was made to feel welcome – not only by faculty and friends in the department but also through regular communication with the scholarship team, all of whom helped me settle in as fast as possible. I found myself in an atmosphere charged with enthusiasm, where everyone enjoys what they do and takes pride in their work.

Along with the academic atmosphere, my favourite part of life in a university is finding the balance between applying what I have learnt and learning new things. This is very true of TU Delft too, and I am enjoying exploring different aspects of my chosen areas of interest while at the same time going deeper. But it has not stopped there. I have also had the opportunity to find out about work being done in other fields of research and to join multiple networks of people from both academia and the industry. That is what this scholarship has done for me – it has given me the chance to experience a thriving interdisciplinary atmosphere and the space to explore and grow in it.

An important aspect of a scholarship to an academic institution is the financial aid it provides. The financial support that this scholarship gives students plays a crucial role in their ability to follow their aspirations. The access to opportunities and the chance to learn from, interact and work with experts combined with financial support is what brings even the most distant dreams within reach to many. I take pride in being a recipient of this scholarship in TU Delft, and I am very grateful to the Justus and Louise van Effen scholarship board and to TU Delft for giving me this chance.

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TU Delft, 18<sup>th</sup> April 2023