

STEM SPOTLIGHT

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Q How did you select your college major?

A About that only thing I could figure out in my freshman year of college was that I hated writing papers but my math homework was fun, or at the very least, satisfying. Satisfying in that I could solve a set of problems that sometimes resembled puzzles AND there was (most of the time) one right answer. Challenge, complete, done... I didn't have to worry if I could possibly tweak a word to make it better. The more I got into my degree courses the more fun puzzles I found in physics classes too. Basically, I followed what I liked because I had no idea what my big picture goals were at the time.

Q What was the biggest influence in your selection of major/ career?

A My parents always encouraged me to get good grades and pursue a practical degree in college, but aside from this obvious example, talking to other professionals, teachers, and students as well as reading and researching as much as I could were good ways to expand my knowledge of the options I had. I met my current advisor during my undergraduate work, but I actually decided to go to graduate school through conversations I had with my customers at Whole Foods!

Q If you could go back to high school and select any elective course to take that would have better prepared you for college, what would it be?

A I know I said I hated writing papers, but even in engineering (or ESPECIALLY in engineering) communication is extremely important. I also strongly recommend seeking out experience in research, as that will be a valuable tool in any degree path and life. Additionally, I am thrilled I took a keyboarding and document creation class. These skills have proved invaluable ever since.



Q What is your favorite aspect of your job?

A After working as a cashier for six years throughout school, I don't know if I will ever tire of being my own time manager. I love planning, organizing, and solving problems through my own task management routine.

Q How do you/your company make a positive impact on society/our community?

A An important aspect of my engineering studies has been educational outreach. My advisor, peers, and I spend a large chunk of our time sharing what we know with younger students.

Q What is the most interesting thing you have been able to do in your career?

A As an undergraduate student and graduate student I am constantly learning new things and getting to have new experiences! Through physics and engineering I've gotten to tour numerous cool places: Brother, St. Jude Children's Research Hospital, Sharp Electronics, the FedEx Hub at the Memphis International Airport, and the BNSF Intermodal Facility. As a math major, I was able to travel to Budapest, Hungary and take courses from some of the best mathematicians in the world!



Q What makes you get up each morning excited about your profession?

A Productivity, and it's for a great cause! I can't wait to see which job or project I get or what I am going to get to do in the upcoming months and years. I get up excited for the day's projects, experiences with the people I work with, and the satisfaction that my work and the work of my peers benefits the world around me.

Q What advice would you like to share with K-12 students who are considering your profession?

A I love transportation because it's applicable to my everyday experiences, and because it's such a broad field- even within this focus of Civil

Engineering there are so many career options to choose from.

Work hard and find a STEM field that caters to your interests!

