

BELONGING IN *ceat*

with Daniel Salinas



Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Programs



Daniel Salinas is a senior at Oklahoma State University in the College of Engineering, Architecture, and Technology studying Mechanical Engineering. Daniel initially chose this degree because he wanted to make an impact on the energy sector and aid in developing cleaner and more sustainable machines. Specifically, he would like to create cleaner and greener engine alternatives. Daniel was born in

Mexico in a small town in Guanajuato. His family had been ranchers for most of their lives and his father was the one who decided to move his family to the United States. Daniel says that he wants to give back and repay at least a portion of what his family has provided him, given his father spent ten years traveling back and forth between Oklahoma and Mexico while his mother raised the five kids.

Daniel says they are his motivation and what keeps him going.

Daniel attended a charter school in Oklahoma City, a college prep school, and he says they frequently took students on campus tours. He was a freshman in high school when he toured his very first University, which happened to be Oklahoma State. From that tour, he knew OSU was his future home.



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Daniel says, he has had his fair share of good, bad, and ugly experiences as a CEAT student. His academic experience has not been what he had expected. He thought he would breeze through his coursework and obtain straight A's every semester, just as he had done in high school. However, he found that was not the case. Daniel says that each year, he would experiment to find a new system that would balance work, organizations, and academics. It has been a learning process, he says.

Daniel says the main form of support that he received was financial support. There are plenty of opportunities for CEAT students to obtain scholarships and financial aid, he says. Being involved with CEAT Diversity Organizations and through the returning CEAT student scholarships, Daniel continued his education with the financial burden not weighing as much on his shoulders.

Daniel claims he suffered from imposter syndrome in the early stages of his college career. In his sophomore year, he was overly involved, not studying enough, and procrastinating, which ultimately lead him to drop two courses. In the subsequent semesters, Daniel continued to struggle and questioned if he had what it took to become an engineer. Then he remembered his motivation to be an engineer and to graduate college, which is attributed to his family. Every year, Daniel worked harder and began to see improvements. He celebrated the small victories and attempted not to dwell on the setbacks as much. Daniel believes that a change in his mindset was what helped him overcome these obstacles. He says that it is okay not to be sure of exactly the profession you want to get into, but setting a goal helped encourage him along the way! Daniel believes he could not have continued without the encouragement of his

friends, peers, some faculty, and, most importantly, his family.

Daniel is grateful for the fantastic faculty who are great teachers and nurturers. Daniel explains that the faculty who impacted his life include Professor Ramming, Dr. Rouser, Dr. Hahn, Craig Bradshaw, and Professor Moallem. He says that Professor Moallem was a tough professor, but he was passionate about what he taught and adamant about getting students to think and enjoy engineering. Daniel says, he pushes his engineering students like no other professors and although it was hard most of the time, he showed him how far he could push himself for a passing grade. Daniel wants to say 'thank you' to Professor Moallem for being a tough professor, because he helped him grow as a person.

Daniel says he was heavily involved in the Society of Hispanic



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Professional Engineers (SHPE) for much of his time here at OSU. SHPE was filled with students from similarly disadvantaged backgrounds, so it was easy to connect and make friends. It was a huge family and one that looked out for one another. Daniel was very fond of the outreach programs, and he made sure to participate as much as possible. They hosted STEM-based activities for middle schools, hosted financial aid workshops for high school students, and tutored kids at a youth development center. Daniel had many people help him out when he was a kid, so he also wanted to do the same for others. SHPE was where he met his first friends and spent most of his time at the beginning of his college career. Daniel owes a lot to SHPE, and he hopes it continues to prosper and grow.

There are many things Daniel wishes he knew starting out:

First, engineering is a challenging major and one that requires

dedication, passion, and sacrifice to be successful.

Not only that, but college is usually a once-in-a-lifetime experience, and the time spent at college should be enjoyed. Balance is the key. Start your work as early as you can so that you may reap your hard work with a fun weekend or activity. Break homework down into consumable daily chunks and keep a daily checklist.

Do not get overinvolved with organizations too quickly. And when you join an organization, don't simply be a member, be genuinely involved and participate.

Passion and curiosity should be a driving force to get you to do your work. It's okay to change majors if it means discovering a passion and excelling in it.

Sleep and exercise are crucial and non-negotiable. Sleep at least 7 to 8 hours a day and exercise at least three times a week. Sleep is your

mind and body recharging, and you will not perform to your best if you lack sleep. All-nighters are nothing to be proud of. Do your work early and get your sleep! Exercise has also been shown to reduce stress and overall increase your mood. Engineering courses typically have ample amounts of homework and projects. Still, there is more than enough time within the week to get them done in a timely matter. It is easier said than done, but the sooner you start working on your assignments early, the higher chances it becomes a habit as you progress.

As far as GPA and jobs are concerned, Daniel thinks we tend only to notice those students who are truly excelling. We can only do the best we can. Try your best, and as long as you keep moving, you will be okay. Daniel would have told his younger self to procrastinate less. Develop and work on your soft skills. Ask for help. Surround yourself with good students and friends. There is a saying that you are the average of



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the five people you hang out with the most.

Go to SI sessions, study with friends and peers, and spend time with faculty.

Lastly, do not compare yourself to others. You have your journey, and

while it may seem that your peers and everyone around you are figuring out their life, be happy for them and know that you too will be there someday.

For Daniel, Inclusion is asking for other's opinions. Inclusion is actively

listening to another. Inclusion is emptying all preconceived notions and trying to understand someone, or a group of people, for who they indeed are. Daniel belongs in CEAT, because CEAT has made him feel at home and because he has paid way too much money not to be a part of it.

