

BELONGING IN *ceat*

with Kaleb Runte



Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Programs



Kaleb Runte is a senior majoring in Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering (MAE) in the College of Engineering, Architecture and Technology (CEAT) at Oklahoma State University (OSU).

Kaleb grew up with a love for computers and would often spend countless hours playing video games or repairing them.

Kaleb shared, that college was not a part of his original plans. His plan was to attend a trade school since he was motivated by hard work and having a means to support himself. Later, he reconsidered college when his high school advisor encouraged him to tour some college campuses. Kaleb stayed close to home and

toured a few colleges in Texas but later learned about Oklahoma State from his cousin who shared about their experience and encouraged Kaleb to attend a campus tour.

When Kaleb arrived on campus he felt an instant connection and knew OSU was home--from the beautiful campus, to the people and the ENDEAVOR building, an undergraduate research laboratory. ENDEAVOR was not quite finished during Kaleb's tour but the solar panels, wind turbine and countless windows caught his attention. Next, he toured the Advanced Technology Research Center where he saw students studying in the Student Excellence Center and he was fascinated by the countless

opportunities students were able to experience daily like the Baja car and turbine engine.

When Kaleb came to OSU CEAT he originally enrolled in Electrical and Computer Engineering (ECE) but after three semesters he realized it was not the program for him despite his success in his courses. Kaleb struggled with changing his major because he was raised to finish what he started but he came to the realization that changing to another CEAT major was like changing lanes in a marathon and that college it's not a sprint.



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As a CEAT student, Kaleb has enjoyed the CEAT events like CEAT verses Spears, CEAT Wellness Week, and living in Parker Hall for three years; once as a freshman, a Parker Engineering, Architecture and Technology Expert (PEATE) mentor, and a Community Mentor (CM).

Kaleb shared that as a prospective CEAT student he was sold on the dream of engineering but was not prepped for the challenges he would face in pursuing an engineering degree since he did not have a strong science, technology, engineering or mathematics (STEM) foundation in high school.

Academically, Kaleb was drawn to mechanical and aerospace engineering because of SOLIDWORKS, 3D molding and 3D printing. He has found the challenges of an engineering degree to be daunting at times. Since his freshman year, Kaleb has seen countless friends drop or change their major. For his success, Kaleb took advantage of tutoring resources, Supplemental Instruction (SI), upperclassmen leadership, and various campus resources.

For incoming students Kaleb recommends the first two years of college to take advantage of all the tutoring and support available in CEAT and throughout the University to keep you from drowning in course work. As the courses advance, Kaleb suggest utilizing your Teaching Assistants (TA), faculty or professors, and your peers. For Kaleb, the most valuable group on campus are peers. Study groups allow for a diverse group of people to come together to share the many ways to approach problem solving, comprehension of the content, and when collaborating on projects.

Two challenges that Kaleb faced in pursuing his degree were tuition and academics. He said, finding a way to pay for school felt overwhelming but with manageable loans and CEAT's continuing student scholarship he was able to afford college.

The academic struggles were the learning curve of not having a STEM background in high school but with Supplemental Instruction (SI) resources Kaleb was able to gain the support he needed to be successful.

The faculty who impacted Kaleb's college experience was Assistant Dean of Engagement and Inclusion, Carisa Ramming. He shared, that Ramming's dedication to the CEAT Summer Bridge Program set him on the right track. Ramming taught Physics during his year of Summer Bridge which was his first exposure to a college course. That memory is important to Kaleb, he recalled learning about significant figure and how to maintain them. He said, Ramming always made sure he was doing well and encouraged me to sit on the front row of her Statics class. Kaleb accidentally fell asleep in class once and Ramming called him out to wake him but he said, in his defense 8:30am classes are not a strength.

Giving back to the OSU and CEAT community was important to Kaleb. He chose to be a Community Mentor in Parker Hall because he wanted the opportunity to make a positive impact on incoming CEAT students and provide a great experience like he received during his first year in Parker Hall.



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When Kaleb joined the Parker community as a freshman, he said he was nervous, scrawny and often had bed head but the Parker community changed him in many ways for the better. Kaleb shared that Parker's impact on his life inspired him to contribute to the growth and development of CEAT students by making sure they felt included and knew about opportunities and resources.

Kaleb found familia on campus through his peers and joining the Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers (SHPE). The upperclass peers who pushed Kaleb and helped him to be successful were Daniel Salinas, Isela Ortiz, Jon Bernal, Brandon Pham, and Matthew Griffin. Kaleb's community helped him grow personally and professionally by helping him come out of his comfort zones and learn how to network. So giving to this community was of great importance. Kaleb served on the SHPE executive team, participated in SHPE's outreach efforts with Noche de Ciencias and SHPE Discovery Day events and attend national and regional conferences.

Kaleb's advice to an incoming student wanting to pursue an engineering, architecture or technology degree is to keep it simple--eat, sleep, go to class, and call your mom. For Kaleb a healthy body includes a healthy mind and utilizing the great campus resources for nutrition, exercise, and mental health. He continued, that when you break down the price of each course why wouldn't he go to class. Parents, more specifically for him, Kaleb's Mom is always thinking about his well-being. So his advice is to call home at least once a week.

Kaleb shared that overall CEAT has positively impacted him in more ways than he can count. As a shy student with a bad haircut, who would stay in his room when he came to campus; Kaleb is very grateful for the three years he has been a member of the CEAT community.

For Kaleb, "Inclusion is sitting with the kid eating by himself. Inclusion is disregarding everything to do with a person's appearance and book cover judgement. It costs nothing to reach

out. Social groups benefit when they are diverse. Inclusion is accepting other people's opinions and discussing them versus causing an argument."

Kaleb Runte is a Mechanical and Aerospace Engineer and he belongs in CEAT because no one should be excluded. "Trust me, I am getting my degree."

Belonging In CEAT is a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion publication that highlights academic experiences of students in the College of Engineering, Architecture and Technology at Oklahoma State University.

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