

Our 2025 Scholars

Biography section

Please enjoy these biographies and thoughts by our 2025 scholars. They are listed in alphabetical order.

Tanequa Bailey

I'm a Software Engineering major at San Jose State University, driven by resilience, curiosity, and a desire to create technology that positively impacts underserved communities. My journey hasn't been easy, I grew up in a turbulent environment and entered foster care before emancipating and completing high school. Despite the challenges, I remained focused and determined to build a better future.

I originally pursued Political Science and worked at a law firm mentoring foster youth, but eventually realized my true passion was in technology. After exploring software engineering through community college courses, I found joy in problem-solving and creative thinking and knew I had found my path.

At SJSU, I'm actively involved in the Guardian Scholars Program, SWE, and SCE. These communities support my academic and personal growth, while giving me opportunities to uplift others, especially fellow foster youth and young women in tech. I was also recently accepted into the Undergraduate Research Opportunity Program (UROP), where I look forward to contributing to meaningful research and preparing for graduate school.

My goal is to develop technology that expands access to essential resources and opportunities. Each step of my journey has shaped who I am, and I'm excited to keep building a future rooted in purpose, empathy, and innovation.

Frances Belleza

I am a Software Engineering student at San Jose State University, driven by curiosity, passion, and perseverance. My academic journey hasn't been linear, but through resilience and self-discovery, I found a path that combines my interests in technology and biology. At SJSU, I am involved with the Society of Women Engineers (SWE), where I've built a supportive community of like-minded women, and the Wilkinson Research Lab, where I explore how software can advance biological research and human health. My dream is to become a research scientist in biotechnology, creating software solutions that improve lives and make healthcare more accessible.

Sara Berarducci

I'm a first-year Electrical Engineering student at San Jose State University, excited to explore, build, and create. My interest in engineering began during a difficult time after being diagnosed with scoliosis at age twelve, I spent years wearing a back brace for nearly 23 hours a day. But in high school, I found joy and identity beyond my brace through physics, computer science, and hands-on projects.

One of those projects was BL!NKr, a DIY LED strip controller I designed and launched on Kickstarter. I loved every part of the process from wiring sensors to watching sound waves on my dad's old oscilloscope. Building something from the ground up showed me how engineering could be both fun and empowering.

Outside the classroom, I've stayed creative through music and storytelling. I play piano and sing, and I've written original songs to perform at school events. I've also been an active member and Dungeon Master in my Dungeons & Dragons club, where I get to build imaginative worlds with others.

At SJSU, I'm eager to join clubs like IEEE, Robotics, and Cube³, learn from my peers, and discover what kind of engineer I want to become. Whatever I do, I know I want to build things that matter.

Neha Bhaskarabhotla

I'm an Electrical Engineering student at San Jose State University with a passion for creativity, innovation, and cross-disciplinary learning. My path to EE began with building circuits and programming in high school, but it was during my first year of college combined with a surprising source of inspiration, the film *Interstellar*, that I discovered how engineering could bridge science, creativity, and imagination.

Electrical Engineering stood out to me because it doesn't just teach how things work, it explores *why* they work. Through SJSU's Spartan Racing team, I've gained hands-on experience in CAD, circuit design, and PCB manufacturing, while also building strong technical foundations. I've conducted research on Advanced Driver-Assistance Systems through Project Engineering Success, and I hope to continue contributing to research that blends hardware with real-world applications.

Outside of academics, I'm an active member of SWE, where I've found mentorship, networking opportunities, and a supportive community of women engineers. I also nurture my love for music as a vocalist and performer with Sarang, SJSU's South Asian a cappella club.

Long term, I aim to work in R&D—possibly in music tech, bioengineering, or space systems—to help make technology more accessible and meaningful across communities.

Bethany Burga

I am a freshman studying Biomedical Engineering, driven by a passion for innovation, adaptability, and kindness. My interest in prosthetics began after watching *Soul Surfer*, which inspired me to pursue a career creating and improving prosthetics for athletes and individuals seeking accessible solutions. I gained early hands-on experience while volunteering at Palmdale Regional Hospital, where I learned from the biomedical department and worked closely with patients. My dream is to design advanced prosthetics that not only enhance accessibility but also push the boundaries of athletic performance. If I could give advice to my younger self, it would be to start serving the community earlier and even create a club to spark that same passion in others.

Troy Calderon

I'm an Aviation and Technology student at San Jose State University with a passion for flight, leadership, and helping others succeed in the field. I chose aviation because I've always been fascinated by how airplanes work and how they connect people across the world. Though I entered college without knowing anyone in aviation, I quickly learned to navigate challenges through dedication and involvement.

In my early semesters, I balanced rigorous coursework with serving as a fraternity president and organizing professional conferences. These experiences taught me valuable skills in time management, teamwork, and problem-solving skills I now use to support other students. I'm actively involved in Alpha Eta Rho, where I serve on the president's advisory committee and am pursuing a position on the National Student Executive Committee to advocate for student voices and help mentor future leaders.

My goal is to start my flying career in the airline industry to gain experience and operational discipline, and then transition into business aviation, where I can bring a high level of service and professionalism to clients. Along the way, I hope to mentor new pilots and inspire others to get involved, grow as leaders, and take full advantage of the opportunities in aviation.

Jennyfer Camacho

I'm a Chemical and Materials Engineering student with a passion for using science to improve lives especially through the development of advanced pharmaceuticals. I first became interested in STEM as a young girl, participating in programs like AAUW's Tech Trek that encouraged girls to pursue science. That early exposure, combined with a growing love for chemistry in high school, led me to choose chemical engineering for its wide range of real-world applications, from energy to medicine.

As a first-generation college student, I'm committed to uplifting others in my community. I've spoken at the San Joaquin Delta College Youth Conference to inspire high school students, and I've taught coding and robotics to young girls through the UC Davis Ujima GIRL program to help them see STEM

as exciting and accessible. I also worked as an organic chemistry tutor, supporting students through one of the most challenging courses in the STEM track and helping expand academic resources on campus.

In the future, I hope to give back by speaking at STEM outreach events, returning to Tech Trek as a mentor, and continuing to support underrepresented youth in science. My goal is to make science more inclusive while contributing to meaningful innovations in the pharmaceutical field.

Aditya Chawla

I'm a Computer Engineering graduate student with a strong passion for Artificial Intelligence not just for its technical depth, but for its human impact. My path to AI wasn't marked by a single moment, but by many small sparks that built into a deeper purpose: using technology to solve real human problems. From supporting doctors in diagnoses to helping people better understand themselves, I believe AI can and should make life more meaningful.

Alongside my studies, I work as a Graduate Assistant in the Office of the Registrar, helping undergraduates stay on track to graduation through advising and system improvements. I also serve as a Peer Mentor with the Engineering Student Success Center, where I guide fellow graduate students especially international and first-gen students through academic and personal transitions.

My dream is to design AI systems that enhance human well-being tools that listen, adapt, and support people emotionally and mentally, not just functionally. I want to build the kind of technology that helps people grow, reflect, and feel understood.

Driven by empathy, innovation, and a desire to give back, I'm building a career that combines engineering skill with human connection one system, one solution, one conversation at a time.

Hannah Chen

I'm a Mechanical Engineering student driven by curiosity and a passion to improve lives through technology. Inspired by my grandpa who built a warm, sunlit play space and introduced me to hand tools, I developed a deep love for hands-on problem solving from an early age. My high school robotics team experience strengthened this passion and gave me a supportive community where I learned teamwork and perseverance.

At San Jose State, I'm involved in the Formula SAE team, working on electronics design, and serve as an officer in the Anti Club Theatre Club to grow my leadership skills. Watching my grandpa's health challenges motivated me to pursue engineering with a focus on biomedical devices, hoping to create technologies that make a real difference.

My advice to my freshman self? Don't be shy say yes to every opportunity, even if it's outside your comfort zone, so you won't have regrets.

Janet Chiem

I'm a Software Engineering student driven by creativity, resilience, and a passion for making technology accessible and helpful to others. Growing up in an immigrant family with limited resources, I found magic in my father's old computer, a gateway to connection, learning, and hope. This early experience inspired me to build apps that simplify life, especially for those facing challenges like ADHD or limited access to resources.

Beyond coding, I co-lead an online writing club, where creativity and communication help me grow both personally and professionally. My dream is to create innovative, user-friendly tools that improve everyday lives, one pixel at a time.

My advice? Embrace every opportunity, connect with others, and savor the unique experience of being a freshman because time moves fast, and every moment counts.

Jonathan Cortez

I'm an Electrical Engineering student driven by curiosity and a passion for understanding how the modern world works. Early challenges, especially with microcontroller programming, tested my confidence, but seeking help and dedicating time to learning helped me overcome self-doubt and excel academically.

Through hands-on experience with SJSU's Project Engineering Success, I developed both technical and teamwork skills, while building valuable connections with peers. My dream is to work in the nuclear power industry, advancing safer, more sustainable energy solutions to benefit the environment and society.

My advice to others is simple: struggling doesn't mean you're not capable growth comes through persistence, asking questions, and embracing every learning opportunity.

David D'Amico

I'm an Industrial & Systems Engineering student at San José State University who's driven by a passion for problem-solving and improving how systems work. Growing up in a family that faced financial challenges taught me the importance of efficiency and planning, values that naturally led me to ISE, where technical knowledge meets real-world impact.

At SJSU, I serve as President of the Institute of Industrial & Systems Engineers (IISE) and Chair for the 2026 IISE Western Regional Conference. I'm also active in SOLES and AIAA, where I enjoy building community and helping other students find opportunities to grow.

My career goal is to work as a product manager or systems engineer in advanced manufacturing, focusing on creating sustainable, low-waste processes in consumer technology. I'm motivated by the idea of making innovation more environmentally responsible and hope to mentor future engineers along the way.

I live by the belief that growth happens when you step outside your comfort zone, get involved early, stay curious, and never stop learning.

Aniya Dogra

I'm a Civil and Environmental Engineering student passionate about sustainability and protecting our planet. Inspired by events like the Australian Bush Fires and California's Thomas Fire, I chose this path to understand environmental impacts and develop solutions for resilient infrastructure.

At San Jose State University, I serve as a student director on the Student Union Board and hold leadership roles in ASCE and the CSU Water Source executive committee. My dream is to become a water resources engineer, working to strengthen community infrastructure and connect policy, research, and practice.

My advice to my freshman self: enjoy the journey and trust that everything will work out as it should.

Paul Brandon Estigoy

I'm a disciplined, curious, and collaborative Computer Engineering student passionate about understanding how technology works beneath the surface. From creating Roblox games as a kid to exploring both software and hardware, I've always been driven to decode the “magic” behind electronics.

As a program director for SASE, I connect new students with mentors and organize hackathons that link teams with industry professionals. My dream is to become a software or firmware engineer, developing solutions that impact healthcare, semiconductors, or technology like real-time braking systems or health tech software.

My advice to myself? Success is a mountain climbed one step at a time, and it's important to enjoy the journey, not just the destination.

Aryan Gaur

I'm a friendly, hard-working, and ambitious Computer Engineering student inspired by my father's experiences growing up in a rural Indian community without access to healthcare. Motivated to create technology that helps underserved communities, I dream of developing affordable, scalable solutions—like drone delivery systems—that improve healthcare access.

Outside of academics, I'm passionate about powerlifting, which helps me build discipline, strength, and confidence. My advice to my freshman self is to get involved in as many opportunities as possible and connect with the brilliant minds around me to grow both personally and professionally.

Javier Gomez

I'm a Mechanical Engineering student who never gives up. I chose this major because it covers a broad range of topics, allowing me to explore different career paths within engineering. I'm actively involved in SOLES, connecting with fellow Latino engineers, and Spartan Racing, where I apply classroom knowledge to real-world projects. My dream is to become a thermal engineer in the space or consumer electronics industries. My advice to my freshman self is to join technical clubs early—they're invaluable for gaining experience and discovering your true interests.

Ming Yang Hang

I'm a driven and innovative Electrical Engineering student with a passion for embedded systems and ASIC design, focused on advancing autonomous vehicle technology. Growing up in an engineering family, I developed a love for problem-solving early on, from building LEGO sets to designing combat robots. As Vice Chair of the IEEE Student Chapter and lead hardware designer for Spartan Racing's Battery Management System, I've honed my leadership, technical, and teamwork skills. My goal is to create smarter, safer transportation systems through intelligent hardware and automation. I believe in embracing failure, building connections, and continuous learning to overcome challenges and make a meaningful impact in engineering.

Erica Rios Hernandez

Ambitious and driven Mechanical Engineering student passionate about innovation and creativity. Inspired by a Disney Imagineer's work on advanced robotics, I discovered my love for engineering and found a supportive community at SJSU through the Society of Women Engineers, where I currently serve as Director of Professional Development. I'm also a design engineer for SJSU Formula SAE, collaborating on high-performance vehicle design. With hands-on experience from my internship at Johnson & Johnson MedTech, I aspire to work as an R&D engineer in surgical robotics, advancing minimally invasive medical technologies to improve patient care.

Juan Hernandez

I'm an ambitious and easygoing Aviation and Technology student passionate about flying and travel. After earning my private pilot certificate in high school, I chose to advance my skills through SJSU's aviation program, where I've found a supportive community and invaluable opportunities. As Captain of the Precision Flight Team and Treasurer of the Flying 20 club, I've gained leadership experience and industry connections that have shaped my career goals. While my dream is to become a major

airline pilot, I'm also interested in airline management to help improve safety and efficiency in aviation. My advice to new students is to get involved building a strong community has been key to my success and growth.

Htut Aung Hlaing

I'm a Computer Engineering student with a strong interest in cybersecurity, quantum computing, and hardware systems. My passion for technology began with my father's A+ exam prep book, which not only sparked my curiosity about computers but also helped me improve my English after moving to the U.S.

Adapting to a new culture and education system was challenging, but through engaging classes, campus jobs, and co-founding the Burmese Association Club (BURSA) at San Jose City College, I gained the confidence to pursue engineering. BURSA became a supportive community for Burmese students, where I organized cultural events and advocated for club funding through student government.

Financial challenges taught me resilience. I applied for scholarships that not only supported my education but also connected me with mentors who shaped my journey. One of my proudest achievements was winning first place in my Capstone Project, where my team worked with Hacker Dojo to improve access to tech careers for first-generation and low-income students.

My goal is to become a research engineer, designing secure, reliable systems that protect information and devices in a world increasingly shaped by quantum computing and IoT. I'm passionate about making future technologies safer and more inclusive.

Tzu-Ting Hsu

Driven and detail-oriented, I transitioned from a high school music background to electrical engineering after discovering a passion for math and robotics. My interests lie in digital signal processing and artificial intelligence, highlighted by a project using GAN models to generate music. Currently, I'm focused on building practical skills through the SAGE program and an internship combining AI with hardware testing. I'm dedicated to applying my knowledge to real-world problems and aspire to work in hardware companies developing smarter, more efficient technologies. Outside of academics, I enjoy driving along the ocean to relax and clear my mind. My advice to my freshman self would be to embrace opportunities beyond the classroom joining clubs, networking, and seeking internships early are crucial for growth and career exploration.

Thao Huynh

Ambitious and willing to learn, I chose software engineering to build a stable future for my family and to create technology that improves lives. Balancing heavy coursework with multiple jobs, I've embraced the belief that "where there is a will, there is a way." My internship at a National Lab strengthened my passion for impactful projects in clean energy and innovation. I also volunteer as a peer tutor and lead charity fundraisers, reflecting my commitment to community and collective action. My dream job involves diverse projects and a supportive work environment that values work-life balance. I advise new students to ask questions fearlessly and build strong connections with mentors and professors.

Trevor Iwamura

Friendly, eclectic, and passionate, I discovered my love for civil and environmental engineering through a blend of creativity, nature, and design. Inspired by environmental engineers I met early on, I returned to school to pursue STEM and found a renewed passion for learning. I've enjoyed tutoring and supporting fellow students, fueling my interest in teaching someday. My dream job is in coastal engineering, where I can work hands-on protecting coastal communities from climate change while spending time outdoors. I'm excited to build a welcoming and active community here in San Jose.

Emma Johnston

Ambitious, passionate, and inquisitive, I've been captivated by aviation since childhood. As the first in my family to pursue this path, I've overcome challenges through perseverance and gained valuable experience through internships and leadership roles in aviation clubs at SJSU. My goal is to work in Airport Operations at a major airport, where I can make a meaningful impact and inspire more women to join the aviation industry. I encourage new students to get involved and embrace every opportunity, no matter the challenges.

Samuel Thomas Joseph

Thinker, inventive, and relentless, I'm passionate about solving complex problems in aerospace engineering. From space robotics internships in high school to hands-on projects like designing a Mars rover and a CubeSat solar sail mission at San José State, I've embraced every challenge with enthusiasm. I'm eager to apply my skills as an aerodynamicist in automotive racing or as a guidance, navigation, and control (GNC) engineer on space missions. I believe in hard work balanced with self-care to sustain success and growth in this demanding field.

Taiyo Kobayashi

Adaptable, collaborative, and a good listener, I'm passionate about Mechanical Engineering, inspired by the idea of bringing machines to life through design and imagination an interest sparked by the film *Iron Man* and fueled by my experience on my high school robotics team. At San José State University, I balance my academic pursuits with activities like fencing and community gaming, which help me build diverse connections and develop teamwork skills. My dream career lies in robotics whether in medical devices, humanoid robots, or space exploration where I hope to create technology that improves lives and bridges engineering with humanity. I encourage others to get involved early in college to build skills, networks, and confidence for the future.

Landon Krivanec

Driven and curious, I study Mechanical Engineering to turn ideas into real-world solutions. As President of Tau Beta Pi at San José State University, I'm passionate about building a strong engineering community focused on mentorship and professional growth. My dream is to design innovative robotic surgical systems that improve patient outcomes and make advanced medical care more accessible. I believe embracing challenges and getting involved early are key to growth both as a student and a future leader in engineering.

Andre Li

Curious and tenacious, I chose Electrical Engineering to be at the forefront of developing new technologies that shape the future. Despite challenges along the way, my passion for innovation keeps me motivated. As a mentor with the Society of Quantum Engineers at SJSU, I help foster curiosity and hands-on learning in quantum technology. My dream is to become a principal scientist in semiconductor research, advancing new materials to overcome current limitations and inspire the next generation. I believe staying connected with the community and asking for help are essential parts of the journey.

Chiawei Lin

Sporty, optimistic, and friendly, I chose Electrical Engineering to create technology that expands access and improves lives, especially for underserved communities. Inspired by a desire to help others and guided by resilience learned through challenges like a hand injury, I am passionate about designing affordable, low-power devices to bridge the digital divide. At SJSU, I'm active in engineering projects, student leadership, and sports teams, believing that teamwork and community support are key to success. My goal is to use innovation to make knowledge and resources truly accessible to all.

Ximena Lopez Jimenez

I'm a welcoming and passionate Mechanical Engineering student at San José State University with a unique journey shaped by resilience and self-discovery. Growing up in an immigrant family, I faced challenges navigating resources and finding my path. Originally dreaming of becoming a police officer, I found my true passion through hands-on STEM programs and mechanical design projects like building a hovercraft. Alongside engineering, music has been a vital part of my life I'm currently president of the Mariachi OroAzul club, where I blend leadership, culture, and community. My goal is to combine my love for engineering and music to create meaningful impact and support others on their own journeys.

Andrew Mar

I'm a kind and helpful Chemical and Materials Engineering student at San José State University with a passion for understanding how things work. Inspired by a memorable chemistry demonstration in high school, I developed a strong interest in chemical reactions and their applications across industries like biotech, food, and electronics. Despite challenges during the pandemic, I stayed resilient by engaging with peers, joining multiple engineering organizations, and growing my communication skills. Coming from a Japanese-American farming background, I also love gardening and food science, which fuels my goal to make comfort foods more affordable and sustainable by improving production processes and waste management. I believe in balancing hard work with self-care to maintain long-term success.

Jacqueline Martinez Carreno

Originally from Mexico, my passion for mechanical engineering grew from helping my aunt repurpose materials and fixing things with my dad. A pivotal moment came in high school when I took a Women in Engineering class that opened my eyes to the creativity and teamwork behind engineering. I chose mechanical engineering for its broad scope, allowing me to explore diverse fields from energy systems to design.

As a first-generation college student, I'm actively involved in programs like EOP and MESA, and I volunteer at STEM events to support diversity and inspire future engineers. My dream is to design affordable, less invasive medical devices to improve epilepsy treatment or work in the fast-paced world of Formula 1 engineering. I believe in making a positive impact through innovation while encouraging others to pursue their passions.

Katie McMahon

Inspired by my dad's 27 years in the Air Force as a KC-10 Boom Operator, my passion for aviation took flight growing up around military service. My first orientation flight at The Nut Tree Airport confirmed my dream to pursue a career in aviation. Despite early doubts about my abilities, I've built confidence through practice and dedication.

At San José State University, I'm active in the Women in Aviation club, serving as Treasurer for 2025 and was honored to attend the Women in Aviation International Conference. I'm also part of SJSU HerCampus, supporting women in building inclusive communities. I aim to help close the gender gap in aviation by breaking barriers and inspiring more young women to join the field.

My advice? Step out of your comfort zone—getting involved opens doors, builds confidence, and connects you with people who share your passion.

Pascale Messa

I am a graduate student in Civil and Environmental Engineering at SJSU, originally from Gabon, Central Africa. Smart, inquisitive, and compassionate, I chose this field because I want to help improve my country's deteriorating water infrastructure and ensure access to clean water and sustainable resources. Through my involvement in the MESA Engineering Program, I enjoy supporting diversity in STEM and volunteering at events such as the Women in Engineering and Conference for Engineering Diversity. My passion lies in designing sustainable water resource infrastructure that positively impacts communities, from stormwater management systems to innovative solutions for water accessibility. Ultimately, my dream is to contribute to my country's development while also inspiring and mentoring the next generation of engineers.

Garrett Miller

I'm a Computer Engineering major at San José State University who's passionate about making technology more accessible and improving people's lives, no matter who or where they are. Honest, charismatic, and intelligent, I strive to use my skills to create solutions that truly make a difference.

Outside the classroom, I serve as an assistant for the SJSU men's soccer team, a role that connects deeply with my background as both a player and coach. I'm also an active member of the Society of Computer Engineers, where I've had the chance to develop my technical skills and build lasting connections.

My career goal is to work in computer hardware, focusing on developing more efficient AI chips that reduce energy use and minimize environmental impact. I live by the motto: "Say yes to every opportunity, you never know which one might change your life."

Luigi Miraglia

Driven by a passion for problem-solving, I chose Software Engineering to create tools that make learning more accessible. In high school, I built a platform to help students better understand math and physics, sparking my love for using technology to make a difference. I've contributed to

Theoremz.com, and my dream is to found a tech company that combines AI and education to expand quality learning worldwide. I believe getting involved early, asking questions, and building connections are key to success.

Tallah Modirzadeh

I'm a determined and collaborative Biomedical Engineering student passionate about combining healthcare, science, and math to improve lives. At San José State University, I've held leadership roles in the Biomedical Engineering Society and BMEidea, helping to revive and lead the club while developing valuable skills. After completing an internship, I'm inspired to become a clinical engineer who bridges the gap between research and patient care by working closely with clinicians. My advice to new students is to get involved early, seek internships, and connect with industry professionals to make the most of their college experience.

Isaac Muniz

I am a Civil and Environmental Engineering graduate student at SJSU, passionate about creating sustainable solutions in water resources engineering. My interest in civil engineering began in high school, where my love for math and science intersected with my fascination for architecture, leading me to a career that bridges both worlds. During my undergraduate studies, I discovered my passion for hydraulics and hydrology, which inspired me to focus on water systems that protect the environment while serving communities. I am also a lifelong member of Chi Epsilon, the civil engineering honor society, which has connected me with like-minded peers, professionals, and opportunities to grow in my field. My dream is to design sustainable water infrastructure from treatment plants to streams and creeks that ensures safe, clean drinking water for future generations.

Brian Nguyen

I am a dedicated and disciplined Industrial & Systems Engineering professional pursuing a master's degree to deepen my knowledge and expand career opportunities. During my undergraduate studies, I was actively involved in the Institute of Industrial Systems Engineers club, where I connected with peers and gained valuable experiences through company tours and events. I'm excited to join the Vietnamese Student Association to stay engaged and build community. My dream is to become a quality manager in the medical device industry, ensuring patient safety and product trust while mentoring others. My advice to my younger self? Get involved early, as college is the perfect time to step out of your comfort zone and grow.

Nicolas Ojeda

Passionate and creative Electrical Engineering student with a strong foundation in circuit design and hands-on experience using Arduino projects. Initially drawn to computer science through robotics, I discovered my true interest lies in the inner workings of electrical components. Despite grappling with

imposter syndrome early on, I persevered and embraced opportunities like volunteering to teach newcomers about Verilog and hardware description languages. My goal is to create accessible open-source resources that simplify electrical engineering concepts for students and hobbyists, making STEM education more approachable. I believe in pushing beyond fear by committing fully to new challenges, knowing that growth comes from taking those leaps.

Jhumar Opinaldo

Thoughtful and composed Computer Engineering student with a passion for hardware and technology sparked by early exposure to computers and gaming. As a transfer student, I'm actively seeking new opportunities to connect and grow through organizations like SCE and Theta Tau. My dream is to work at a leading tech company like NVIDIA, specializing in PCB design to help build a smarter, more efficient technological future. I've learned the importance of getting involved early and pushing myself out of my comfort zone to build meaningful connections and develop professional skills.

Cesar Garcia Perez

I'm an empathetic, resilient, and grounded Mechanical Engineering student who found my passion for engineering after exploring different paths. Drawn to hands-on challenges, I declared my major in mechanical engineering to pursue a career that's both stimulating and meaningful.

Active in organizations like SOLES and SHPE, I volunteer at underfunded schools to inspire students from underrepresented backgrounds to pursue STEM and higher education. I aim to work in the biotech industry, developing technologies like surgical robots and diagnostic devices that improve healthcare and help people.

My advice to myself is to form study groups, network beyond my comfort zone, and get involved in hands-on projects early to build real-world skills.

Khoi Pham

Funny, honest, and caring Computer Engineering student passionate about learning and exploring technology. I've been actively involved in community service through clubs like Global Issues Network and Habitat for Humanity, giving back by supporting underprivileged children and cleaning local areas. Inspired by a lifelong vision, I'm driven to contribute to clean renewable energy, with a goal to work in electric vehicle research and development for a sustainable future. My advice: start applying for internships early and seek out research opportunities with professors.

Minh Pham

Persistent and hardworking Electrical Engineering student passionate about solving real-world problems through technology. Overcoming early challenges in physics taught me the value of determination and teamwork, especially during a project developing a CO2 detector. At San Jose State University, I'm actively involved in MESA and IEEE, where I've found community, mentorship, and professional growth. My goal is to become a wireless test engineer and later a design engineer, improving device safety and performance to make technology people can trust. I believe in stepping out of my comfort zone, getting involved early, and building strong connections to grow both personally and professionally.

Ngoc Lam Pham

Intuitive, pragmatic, and collected Electrical Engineering student driven by the potential of technology in Silicon Valley. Despite early challenges, including a tough start in Calculus 3, I made a strong academic comeback with support from friends and family. I'm actively involved in Project Engineering Success, where I collaborate with peers and learn from expert mentors like Dr. Parent. My dream is to make smartphones more affordable and accessible, helping people benefit from technology without the high cost. My advice to my freshman self: don't be afraid to put yourself out there—fear often holds us back more than reality.

Jainil Rao

Driven and curious Electrical Engineering student specializing in Digital Systems and VLSI. What began as a setback in a VLSI Design course sparked a deep passion for the field, leading me to dive into hands-on projects and technical mastery. At SJSU, I actively contribute as a member of IEEE, a Peer Academic Success Coach, and a Teaching Assistant, supporting peers and fostering community growth. My dream is to gain industry experience and eventually launch a startup that creates practical, open-source VLSI tools to bridge the gap between academia and industry. My advice to my freshman self? Get involved, build connections, and embrace every opportunity relationships can shape your future in ways beyond expectations.

Nitzan Drori Retvizer

I'm an Electrical Engineering student who discovered a passion for electronics in high school, turning a second-choice class into my favorite subject. This experience showed me the power of focusing on what truly interests me and boosted my confidence in learning.

I've volunteered as a mentor at MakeX Palo Alto, a free makerspace that promotes accessible technology and community. Coming from a country with fewer educational resources, I'm proud to help provide opportunities to others.

I'm passionate about environmentalism and hope to contribute to creating more power-efficient products that reduce emissions and make a positive impact.

Christian Rodriguez

Curious and outgoing Civil and Environmental Engineering student with a passion for building and creating meaningful solutions. As a first-generation college student, I found my path after exploring different STEM fields and realizing my love for turning ideas into real structures, from Legos to woodworking projects. Involved in MESA, ASCE Concrete Canoe, and ACI, I'm dedicated to fostering community and hands-on learning at SJSU. My dream is to work on affordable, sustainable water resource projects that improve public health in underserved communities like my family's hometown in Mexico. I'm committed to making a lasting impact through innovative engineering and community engagement.

Francisco Castaneda Rodriguez

I'm an Aerospace Engineering student with a passion for space exploration and hands-on engineering. As a first-generation, undocumented student who immigrated from Mexico at the age of two, I've faced many challenges but those obstacles only pushed me to aim higher. I found inspiration in space, and that spark led me to pursue aerospace engineering as a path to something greater.

My dream is to become an astronaut, but I'm especially excited about starting my career as a test engineer in the aerospace industry. I love working directly with hardware, and being hands-on in environments where real spacecraft are built and tested is what motivates me most.

I'm planning to join my school's rocket or space systems club to gain more experience and connect with others who share my passion. If I could give advice to my younger self, it would be: don't be afraid to talk to people, ask questions, and fail forward because those moments lead to growth, opportunities, and real friendships.

Aidan Rostam

Driven and caring Computer Engineering student specializing in Computer Network System Management, passionate about pursuing a career in cybersecurity. I've faced challenges navigating course selections but remain committed to building a strong foundation in networking. Actively involved in my church community, which inspires me to grow personally and help others. I believe that surrounding yourself with a supportive network is key to success in both school and career. My goal is to become a skilled cybersecurity analyst and make a positive impact in the field.

Karen Salib

Thoughtful, curious, and dedicated Computer Engineering student fascinated by the blend of hardware and software to create real-world solutions. Involved in MESA since freshman year, now giving back as a peer advisor to support others' growth. Eager to explore the versatile fields within Computer Engineering hardware, software, and cybersecurity to find where my passion and skills align best. My advice to my freshman self? Don't be afraid to step out of your comfort zone those connections and experiences shape both your college journey and personal growth.

Jaime Salinas-Romero

Passionate, adaptable, and driven Aerospace Engineering student inspired by the possibilities of space exploration. Despite financial challenges, I've balanced work, school, and community involvement to grow as both an engineer and leader. As Vice President of Outreach for the Society of Latino Engineers and Scientists (SOLES) and Lead of Safety Mission Assurance for SpartanSat, I'm committed to building a stronger, more inclusive engineering community. My dream is to become a systems engineer developing sustainable spacecraft for long-term missions beyond Earth, while inspiring the next generation of underrepresented engineers. I believe growth happens when you step outside your comfort zone and turn setbacks into lessons.

Pedro Sanvee

Hardworking, responsible, and respectful Mechanical Engineering student from West Africa with a passion for improving community well-being through better infrastructure. Inspired by my background, I've focused on HVAC engineering, aligning my strengths with my aspirations. As a student senator for 2025-26, I advocate for fellow students and work to ensure their voices are heard. I also give back by teaching English and Math to students at my uncle's orphanage in Togo and volunteering locally to support those facing food insecurity. My goal is to gain experience as an HVAC design engineer and eventually start my own contractor company. I believe college is not only about technical skills but also about building a strong network that shapes your future.

Aditya Shah

Spontaneous, open-minded, and a critical thinker, I hold a Bachelor's in Electronics and Communication and am passionate about bridging hardware and software to tackle real-world problems. Fascinated by the complexity of hardware, I aim to deepen my expertise and explore how it can integrate with Artificial Intelligence for innovative solutions. At San Jose State, I enjoy being part of the Tennis Club, balancing academics with social engagement. My dream is to launch a tech startup that addresses real challenges with practical, technology-driven solutions. My advice: socialize more, embrace new experiences, and remember every shot not taken is a shot missed.

Zoya Shamak

Motivated, adaptable, and driven Computer Engineering student passionate about the intersection of hardware and software. Inspired by early robotics experiences and empowered by the Society of Women Engineers (SWE) at San Jose State, I've grown into leadership roles fostering community, mentorship, and professional development. With hands-on experience in embedded systems and firmware through internships and technical projects, I aim to bridge the gap between hardware and software by designing reliable, efficient devices. Committed to supporting underrepresented groups in STEM, I strive to create inclusive environments where innovation and collaboration thrive.

Rishi Sheth

Curious, thoughtful, and reliable, I'm a Computer Engineering graduate currently pursuing a Master's in Artificial Intelligence to deepen my understanding of intelligent systems. I'm driven by a passion for exploring new ideas and bridging the gap between theory and real-world application. My hands-on experience includes designing PCBs with Spartan Racing's R&D team, where I honed practical skills in collaboration and problem-solving.

I aspire to work with diverse engineering teams, creating technology that simplifies complex problems and positively impacts people's lives. I believe in staying adaptable, curious, and continuously learning across disciplines. If I could advise my younger self, it would be to passionately pursue any interest fully because true growth and meaningful connections come from diving deep and moving forward.

Pooja Sindham

Resourceful, collaborative, and punctual, I am a Software Engineering professional passionate about transforming complex, time-consuming processes into efficient, scalable solutions. From building automation tools at Accenture and TCS that cut manual workflows from days or hours to minutes, to modernizing legacy tax systems through API integration, I thrive on turning "it takes forever" into "it's already done."

Beyond technology, I am committed to community impact leading neighborhood tree-planting drives and working with local government to improve public spaces. At San Jose State University, I stay connected to my culture and peers through active involvement in the Indian Student Organization.

My dream is to specialize in automation and scalable systems, creating intelligent tools that boost accuracy and free people to focus on creative, high-value work. I also aim to mentor underrepresented engineers, helping them gain the confidence to innovate and lead.

If I could advise my freshman self, it would be: don't hesitate to get involved early. Join clubs, network intentionally, and embrace every opportunity even if it feels uncomfortable at first because these experiences build the foundation for a successful career and meaningful connections.

Janane Sivakumar

Tenacious, humble, and selfless, I chose Biomedical Engineering inspired by the health challenges faced by close family members. Witnessing their struggles with heart disease and Parkinson's fueled my passion to develop medical devices that address complex healthcare problems.

Though I initially struggled with math and science, I transformed those challenges into strengths through perseverance, proactive learning, and seeking support turning doubt into confidence and reaffirming my commitment to this field.

Deeply rooted in my Indian heritage and values, I dedicate time volunteering at my family's temple, practicing selflessness and discipline while helping preserve our community's traditions.

My dream is to become a biomedical researcher focused on creating advanced, affordable biosensors that enable early detection and management of chronic diseases. By integrating electrochemical sensing with machine learning, I aim to develop accessible tools that empower patients worldwide, bridging healthcare gaps and saving lives.

To my freshman self, I would say: don't be shy get involved early. Join clubs, build connections, and embrace opportunities beyond the classroom to grow your skills and confidence for a meaningful career ahead.

Kerry Smith

Driven, honest, and resilient, I've faced and continue to overcome challenges with self-confidence and depression stemming from trauma and a lack of support. These experiences fuel my passion to help others navigate similar struggles whether through founding clubs, managing online communities, or launching a nonprofit aimed at building supportive networks.

At San Jose State University, I created the CHIPS (Career Hacks & Internship Preparedness in STEM) club, where I connected students with professionals via interviews shared on YouTube and Discord, fostering career readiness and community.

Today, I'm living my dream job at Valley Water's Operations & Maintenance Engineering Support Division, working on erosion repair and sediment removal projects that protect properties and reduce flooding in the Coyote and Pajaro watersheds.

My advice? Network relentlessly, show up prepared, and don't wait for opportunities create them. Dive into every experience, even those outside your comfort zone, because growth often comes from the unexpected.

Ruyi Sule

I'm an efficient, quiet, and kind Computer Engineering student driven by a genuine passion for the field. Beyond academics, I'm involved with the ZXE Social Fraternity, where I build community and connections. My career goal is to become a Security Engineer or Architect, focused on protecting systems and networks. My approach is simple stay focused, keep learning, and trust that hard work will lead the way.

Russell Sunio

I am a respectful, kind, and humble Aviation and Technology student majoring in Professional Flight. Aviation is deeply personal to me it's tied to family, sacrifice, and the dream of connecting loved ones across oceans. Growing up, my mother's tireless efforts to support our family and ensure we could visit my father in the Philippines each summer instilled in me a profound love for flying and its power to bring people together.

At San Jose State University, I actively participate in the Precision Flight Team and Alpha Eta Rho, where I've sharpened my piloting skills, learned the value of teamwork, and built meaningful connections with peers and industry professionals. As a first-generation student, I am proud to represent my family's sacrifices and pursue a career that bridges distances much like those that shaped my upbringing.

My dream is to become a commercial airline pilot for United Airlines, flying out of San Francisco International Airport. I'm committed not only to operating flights safely and skillfully but also to addressing the pilot shortage by becoming a Certified Flight Instructor and mentoring aspiring pilots from underrepresented backgrounds. Through my journey, I hope to inspire others to believe in their dreams and the possibilities that hard work and resilience can unlock.

If I could advise my freshman self, I'd say: don't be shy get involved early, network intentionally, and seek out mentorship and internships. Growth comes from showing up, being curious, and embracing every opportunity to learn.

Kayla Szulc

I'm a passionate Aviation and Technology student at San Jose State University, driven by a love for flight and a curiosity about weather, physics, and aircraft systems. I've earned my Private Pilot License, Instrument Rating, and Commercial License while actively participating in Women in Aviation, the SJSU Precision Flight Team, and working as a flight simulator instructor.

My goal is to become a C-130 pilot in the U.S. Air Force. To prepare, I plan to become a Certified Flight Instructor and complete ROTC and pilot training programs. I'm dedicated to mentoring new pilots and supporting the next generation of aviators.

My advice to new students: get involved early clubs and mentorship made all the difference in balancing college and flight training.

Cindy Tat

I'm a kind, diligent, and fun Software Engineering student inspired by an early computer science class where I was one of few girls. Despite feeling outcast and facing discouragement, I pushed through by joining clubs and taking more CS courses, building confidence and resilience. In high school, I helped lead the engineering club, gaining teamwork and leadership skills while empowering others.

My dream is to create tech that supports mental health designing platforms that feel natural and comforting rather than technical. My advice to my freshman self? Get involved in anything that sparks your interest!

Dorian Todd

I'm a driven, innovative, and friendly Mechanical Engineering student passionate about robotics, electronics, and mechanical systems. A defining moment was diagnosing and fixing my combat robot's failure, which taught me how focus and analysis turn challenges into solutions.

As President of the Engineering Club and Lead Mentor for Roseville Rising Programs, I've fostered collaborative, hands-on environments where peers can learn and innovate.

My dream is to lead R&D in humanoid and industrial robotics, designing durable systems that enhance safety by tackling real-world challenges.

My advice to my younger self: focus deeply on a few passions rather than spreading yourself thin quality over quantity leads to true growth.

Jose Luiz Sarabia Torres

Passionate, determined, and compassionate Mechanical Engineering graduate student at San Jose State University, drawn to the field by a love for hands-on work and design, sparked through high school robotics and SOLIDWORKS. Currently serving as President of the SHPE Silicon Valley Professional chapter and Regional Junior Representative, I'm committed to supporting Hispanic students and professionals through outreach and networking. With experience at Lawrence Berkeley National Lab designing components for the cyclotron, I aspire to work in the semiconductor industry and continue advocating for diversity in engineering. My advice: get involved early, seize every opportunity, and build a strong network it's key to unlocking your future.

An Trinh

I'm a resilient and dedicated Engineering Technology student specializing in Computer Networks and Cybersecurity. Inspired by my father's electronics work and shaped by my military service, I'm passionate about protecting people and organizations from cyber threats.

Volunteering at the VA Palo Alto Medical Center allowed me to support IT security efforts while giving back to fellow veterans. On campus, I mentor peers and engage in collaborative learning to strengthen cybersecurity skills.

My goal is to become a cybersecurity engineer focused on threat intelligence and vulnerability management, developing innovative solutions to safeguard critical systems and communities.

To my freshman self, I'd say: ask for help, get involved early, build connections, and embrace challenges persistence and resilience make all the difference.

Linh Truong

I'm an adaptive and empathetic Engineering Technology student specializing in Computer Network System Management. My passion for cybersecurity grew from personal experiences with cyberattacks on myself and my family, inspiring me to protect those vulnerable to online threats.

Active in the MESA Program and NETS Club at SJSU, I support first-generation students and help organize events like hackathons to empower the STEM community.

My dream is to develop affordable, accessible internet technologies that connect and protect people in remote and vulnerable areas, enabling education, safety, and community support.

To my freshman self, I'd say: embrace curiosity, explore every opportunity, and never fear failure growth comes from fearless learning and connection.

Tinsae Woldemichael

I'm a competitive and methodical Electrical Engineering student driven by the field's broad opportunities. Overcoming challenges like procrastination and tough courses taught me the value of goal-setting and strong organization, which transformed my academic performance.

As part of the SAE electronics team, I'm gaining hands-on experience designing safety devices and developing practical skills for real-world engineering.

My dream job is to work as a Hardware Engineer focusing on edge-AI and robotic systems, tackling issues like heat management and electrical noise to create reliable, efficient hardware. I'm also passionate about mentoring new graduates and leading skill-building workshops to help others succeed.

If I could advise my freshman self, I'd say: build good habits early, get involved in clubs, apply widely for internships, and stay consistent small steps lead to big growth.

Thomas Woneis

I'm a dedicated and compassionate Aviation and Technology student whose passion for flying grew unexpectedly from friendly competitions on Microsoft Flight Simulator to nearly 300 real flight hours. Inspired by my grandfather's aerospace career but finding my own path, I discovered that aviation chose me.

At San Jose State University, I'm active in the Precision Flight Team, where I serve as a communications officer and compete in aviation events. This experience fuels my growth as a pilot and allows me to promote aviation to wider audiences.

My dream is to become an airline pilot, connecting people and making the world more accessible. I'm committed to increasing aviation access through programs like Young Eagles and Pilots N Paws, helping underrepresented groups and flying pets to their forever homes.

If I could advise my freshman self, I'd say: don't wait for the perfect plan let passion guide you, embrace failure, and step outside your comfort zone to grow.

Mita Yang

I'm an enthusiastic and organized Software Engineering student who discovered a passion for coding in high school. I love applying logic creatively to solve problems and enjoy the confidence that comes with each coding success.

At San Jose State University, I'm active in the SCE club, where I collaborate on projects and compete in hackathons. This community helps me sharpen my skills and stay connected with the latest technologies.

My dream is to become a game developer, creating immersive games that focus on storytelling and emotional impact games that entertain, inspire, and bring people together.

My advice: start networking and getting involved in clubs as early as possible.

Dax Yuhasz

I'm a dedicated and creative Biomedical Engineering student passionate about making a lasting impact in the medical industry. Motivated by personal experiences with medical costs in my family, I focus on developing practical and efficient medical technologies to help reduce expenses for others. At SJSU, I've been active in fostering community as a facilitator for the Sapphic Space at the Pride Center, supporting queer and LGBT+ engineers in finding connection and encouragement.

Looking ahead, I'm interested in clinical trials and biomedical research, with a goal to pursue a PhD in neural tissue engineering. I believe neural technologies will revolutionize medtech, improving accessibility and treating conditions like traumatic brain injuries. My advice to my freshman self: approach your journey as a marathon, plan carefully, and embrace mistakes as opportunities to learn and grow.

Roman Zarate

I'm a driven and strategic Civil and Environmental Engineering student with years of hands-on construction experience in challenging weather and high-pressure environments. This background inspired me to pursue higher education to design and build impactful, affordable structures that truly benefit the public.

Active in the community since childhood, I volunteer regularly and participate in organizations like MESA, ASCE, and AGC at SJSU. I'm passionate about mentoring younger students, helping them navigate their paths with encouragement and practical advice.

I believe strong communication skills are essential, and I emphasize this to freshmen I mentor, knowing it's key to building connections and advancing both careers and personal growth.

Leul Zelalem

I'm a tenacious and empathetic Mechanical Engineering student inspired by my uncle, a hardware engineer, who sparked my early interest in engineering. Though I faced uncertainty in high school due to limited opportunities, with family support and self-learning, I'm now fully committed to pursuing this field.

I've enjoyed tutoring peers in math and physics and cofounding my high school's Rocketry Club to create hands-on engineering experiences for others. At San Jose State, I look forward to joining clubs like Spartan Baja SAE to connect with fellow engineering enthusiasts.

My dream is to work in the automotive industry, using 3D printing to design replacement parts that extend the life of vehicles, making maintenance easier and more accessible even after manufacturers discontinue parts.

My advice to my freshman self is to get involved, ask questions fearlessly, and take full advantage of every academic and community opportunity.