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My College Experience So Far

Toby S. Lo

Iowa State University, tslo@iastate.edu

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My College Experience So Far

Going to college was always a dream of mine and now that has become a reality. Before I could go to college I first had to finish high school and choose where I wanted to go. I grew up in a small town of around five thousand people and attended the local public school district. This district also served children and teenagers of smaller surrounding communities as well. The schools in the district consisted of East Elementary for kindergarten through fourth grade and the Old Sheldon Middle School and the New Sheldon Middle school for grades five through eight. I say the old and the new middle school because of the fact that I spent two years in the old middle school before it had gotten demolished and spent the last two years in the new middle school that had just been built. I was lucky to experience both of the buildings.

Finally for high school, I attended Sheldon high school. While in high school I participated in choir, football, track and field, and many other things. Also I had finally found out what I had wanted to do in my life and that it would help me choose where I wanted to go for college. I found that I really like finding and knowing how things worked and I decided on engineering. Although I didn’t know what specific field of engineering I wanted to go into, I figured I would wait and go to college to help narrow my choices down.

Because I was going to choose to have an engineering major this would help break down where I wanted to go to college. First off the list was the private colleges and colleges that were too close to home. I wanted to get away from home at a reasonable distance and I didn’t want to go to any of the private colleges because of higher costs. I had also played with the thought of running track and field at a smaller college before I would transfer to go to a larger college that was an accredited engineering school. Eventually my choices were narrowed down to Dordt College in Sioux Center, Iowa, University of
Iowa in Iowa City and Iowa State University in Ames because they were the only schools in Iowa that were accredited engineering schools because I wanted to stay in state. Although I could have gone to Dordt to run college track, I chose not to go there because of how close it was to home, which was a mere twenty-five minutes away from. I had to really think hard to choose between the University of Iowa and Iowa State University. I spent extensive time reading up on what each had to offer for engineering programs among other things.

The summer before my senior year of high school I scheduled a visit to Iowa State University. I went with a one of my best friends and my cousin. This visit had ultimately decided where we would each be going to college. After the visit on Iowa State’s campus, my cousin and I felt that Iowa State was the right place for us while my friend found that it wasn’t the place for him with one reason being that he wanted to go into wildlife field. He eventually chose to go to University of Wisconsin-Steven’s Point. I guess it goes to show differently how people can think even if they’re one of your best friends. The so-called cherry on top of all this was the fact that I received a tuition scholarship in the form of the George Washington Carver Tuition Scholarship because of my academic performance at my school. I got to read the letter one day after football practice and my parents and I were both ecstatic that I received such a gracious scholarship. This had meant this would put a lot less financial pressure on my parents to put my brother and through college at the same time. My brother was already at Iowa State and studying Mechanical Engineering.

Finally in May 2011, I was about to graduate and receive my diploma after a short, but fun trip competing at the Iowa High School Track and Field State Meet. My graduating class consisted of around eighty students. Because of such a small class size compared to many other schools in Iowa I had gotten to get to know nearly all of the other students in my class and become friends with much of them. I still
remember the ceremony and walking down the stage to receive my diploma and my academic excellence award for graduating with at least a 3.0 or a 3.2 GPA throughout fours of high school.

The summer after I had graduated I needed to get a job to help pay for miscellaneous things and to help my parents out with finances. I had gotten a job at a local hydraulic factory where both of my parents worked. My father was the head setup man for all of the CNC machines and got to sit in a nice air conditioned office for most of the day. My mother was a machine operator which is the same job that would do that summer. I have to say my first job was probably one of the worst jobs out of all the jobs my friends had where some friends would complain about being a lifeguard. Since I was working on the factory floor during the summer where there was no air conditioning and was constantly around eighty to a hundred degrees every day, it was miserable even though I had gotten pretty good pay for the whole summer. Working there had given me extra motivation to get a degree in engineering so I wouldn’t have to work in such miserable conditions.

After my short stint at the hydraulic factory it was already time to move into my dorm which would serve as my home for the next year. I had signed up to live in the Maple dorms with my cousin as my roommate. I was excited to experience a new part of my life and I was going to take it on head first. I was nervous to go to my first classes of the year mostly because I still hadn’t really learned where each building was yet and I hadn’t really learned the bus routes yet. I did get help from some friends that were already Iowa State. Even though some of my classes contained more students that were in my whole high school when I graduated, I transitioned well and wasn’t overwhelmed with scale of everything. I also eventually decided to go into Mechanical Engineering with the help of my classes.

Also in my first year I had gotten to meet a lot people whether they were in my classes or they had lived my floor. During the fall, my cousin and I played on two flag football teams. One was with a
couple friends we made from our floor and the other was with some of the older guys that had gone to
the same high school as us. We didn’t have very much success in making it deep into the bracket with
either team but it was still a very fun time. Some other things that I had gotten to do were rush for a
service fraternity with friend of mine and join Habitat for Humanity. Habitat for Humanity is still
something I am a part of while the fraternity thing just wasn’t for me and my friend and I just stopped.

One of my favorite things that had gotten to do in my first year at college was go to all of the
concerts I wouldn’t normally be able to go to. Some shows that I went to were Blink-182 on their Honda
Civic Tour, Breathe Carolina at Vaudeville Mews in Des Moines, and Hawthorne Heights right here in the
M-shop for free because I was a student. Going to these shows were some of the highlights of my first
year at college. Another thing that was pretty amazing was VEISHEA. All of the celebration and things
around campus was pretty cool to see and experience. Another thing that amazed me about VESHEA
was the amount of people that come in for it. I also enjoyed all of the home football games. Tailgating
and cheering in the stand is always exciting and fun.

By the end of the year I had gotten pretty sick of living in the dorms because of the space,
parking all the way at the stadium, and I was sick of some people that were living on my floor. I was glad
that before the end of the year I had signed a lease for an apartment in west Ames with my brother and
cousin. I was also ready to go back home and get some more money from working. This past summer I
again worked in the hydraulic factory except in a different branch which was worse than what I had
done the previous summer. I worked in the assembly branch and had to assemble cylinders and wash
them out with washer that sprayed out hot chemical infused water to remove oil in ninety degree
weather. Working there again added more fuel to fire for me getting my degree. By the time classes
were going to start again I was already done working at the hydraulic factory and getting everything
ready to move in to our new apartment.
My parents came down again and helped us move in and bought some stuff that we needed like food, drinks and my bed so that I could sleep at night. After the first few nights staying in our new apartment, I found that I loved it compared to living in the dinky little Maple dorm. I was ready to get back into the swing of things going to classes and all. The only difference about to classes was that I had to ride the Red 1 bus from west Ames to campus instead just walking to class or taking the Orange route from Maple like last year.

It didn’t take long for me to get back into the swing of things and I was back to balancing my social life with school work. This past fall I didn’t do flag football again, but I did participate in curling which was probably one of the more surprisingly fun things that I had done in my life. The sad thing was that we weren’t going to be able to continue to curl because we had lost the first match of the single elimination tournament bracket. Also this past fall I once again attended the home football games because I had bought season tickets. They were amazingly fun just as always. This first semester the more interesting things I have done so far has been exploring Main Street and going to little hole-in-the-wall restaurants.

Now that this first semester is already done, I find that time goes by fast. I’m getting older every day and time isn’t slowing down and even feels like it goes faster some days than others. I got to make the most of my experiences and time I have here. I want this next semester and the rest of the time I spend here at Iowa State to be some of the most memorable years I have spend living on this planet. Here’s to long and happy life!