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CLASS OF

2020



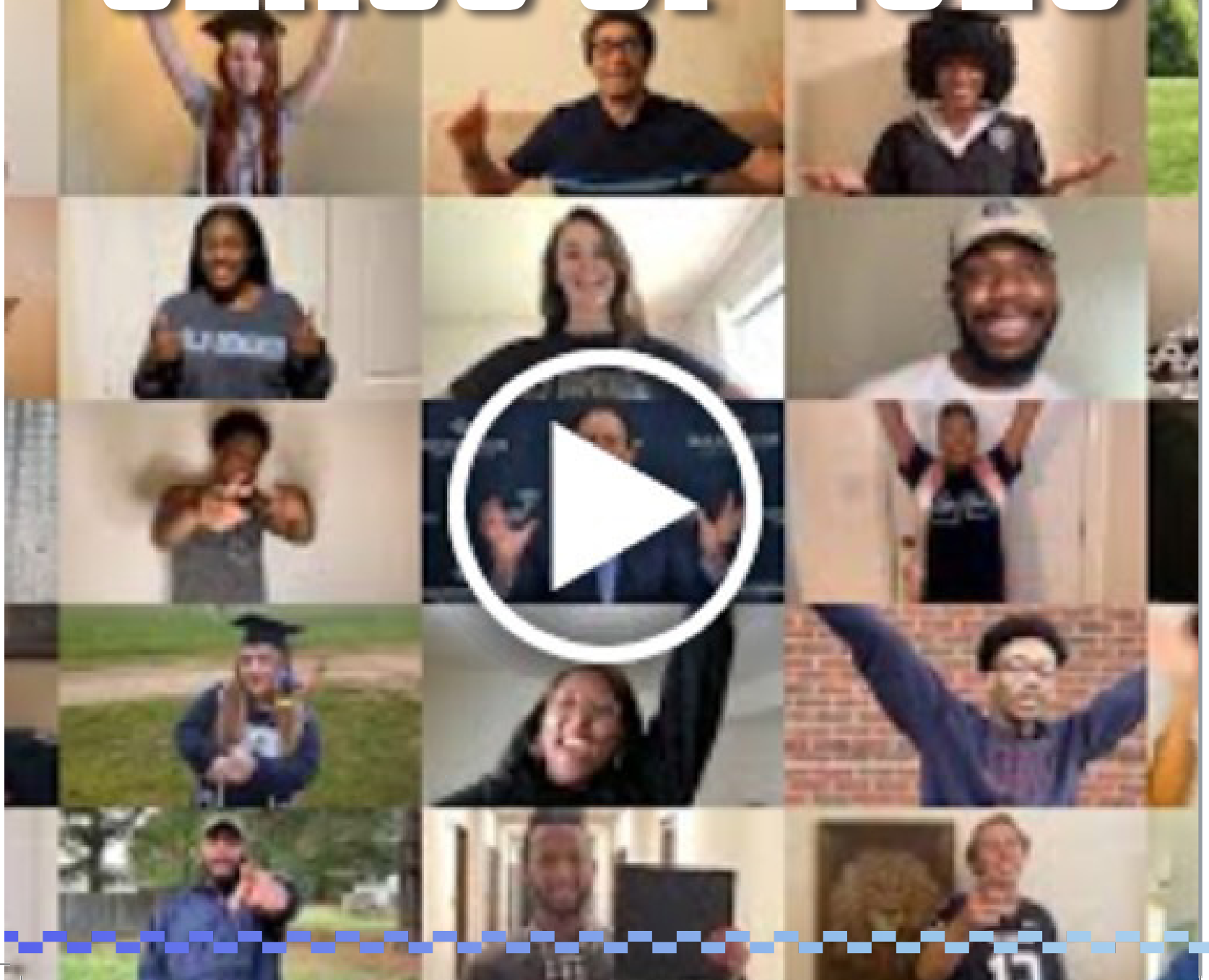
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Batten College of
Engineering and Technology

Congrats



CLASS OF 2020



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Grandmother helped sow ODU engineering student's interest in computers

by Cecilia Ramirez

Preslav Ivanov first became interested in computers as a middle school student in his native Bulgaria. He credits his grandmother, a mathematics teacher and computer programmer, for sparking his interest in math and physics by assisting him in solving real-world scenarios and emphasizing their universal applicability.

He also began taking apart the old computer that his grandmother once used to program, which started his fascination with computer architecture as a way to upgrade various hardware components to make the most out of an old device.

He believes that his "curiosity inspired him to explore building new computing platforms."

This May, he will graduate from Old Dominion University with 4.0 GPAs in two Bachelor of Science degrees -computer engineering and electrical engineering -from the Batten College of Engineering & Technology. He also minored in computer science and completed a concentration in computer hardware systems. He plans to pursue a Ph.D. at Cornell University in the fall and describes his future aspirations to design "high-performance and energy-efficient computer architectures to be leveraged by artificial intelligence algorithms."

Preslav took online classes to finish his undergraduate degrees while being involved in a research internship with Project Brainwave at Microsoft in Redmond, Wash. His internship at Microsoft enabled him to work directly in the development of an FPGA computer architecture for accelerating artificial intelligence computation on the Microsoft

Azure Cloud. Upon graduation, Preslav will continue his work with Microsoft as a contracting hardware design engineer until he starts graduate school.

"Preslav has been a role model to students interested in undergraduate research," said Oscar Gonzalez, professor and chair of electrical and computer engineering.

Prior to Microsoft, Preslav was awarded a prestigious internship with the Virginia Microelectronics Consortium (VMEC) at the University of Virginia that ran from May to August 2019. His work could have an impact in the design of future computer memory chips.

"I worked at the High-Performance Low-Power Lab at U.Va. led by Professor Mircea Stan. We were emulating processing in memory systems and showing how they behave. Since the project that I worked on was just getting started, two Ph.D. students and I were the ones who were doing initial research and building its foundations, so my work was meaningful, and I developed a very good working relationship with the other participants," he said, adding that he hopes his work will be recognized in a conference paper.

His senior design project, ODU IGVC Plus Night Vision, represented ODU at the Intelligent Ground Vehicle Competition at Oakland University in Rochester, Mich., in June 2019. This international, university competition was focused around the auto-navigation of an obstacle course by autonomous robotic vehicles. Some of the project work involved enhancing the vehicle's object-detection capabilities with computer vision and employing artificial neural networks for processing image data.



Preslav moved to Virginia Beach in 2011 and graduated from Cox High School in Virginia Beach before enrolling at ODU.

"I chose ODU due to its proximity to major technology companies and after hearing about the excellent reputation of its engineering program from ODU faculty and students that I knew," he said.

He has had a stellar academic career. He is a recipient of several scholarships, including the Electrical and Computer Engineering Scholarship, the ODU Phi Kappa Phi Scholarship for the Batten College of Engineering & Technology, the ODU Presidential Scholarship, Edward L. White Jr. Scholarship, and Edgar A. and Kathleen Kovner Scholarship.

He is a member of the Tau Beta Pi Engineering Honor Society for academic excellence (for seniors in the top fifth of the Engineering class). He is also a member of the Phi Kappa Phi Honor Society, ODU Association of Computing Machinery and Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers.



Batten College of
Engineering & Technology

Building a future in more ways than one

by Cecilia Ramirez

Earning a degree in any engineering discipline is no cakewalk. Add seeking a Marine Corps commission to the equation and the challenge becomes even greater. That didn't stop civil engineering major Noah Doody, who just earned his Bachelor of Science degree from Old Dominion University with a GPA of 3.87. To top it off, he earned a commission as a 2nd lieutenant in the United States Marine Corps and will be stationed at Quantico, Va., in October.

Growing up, Doody knew he wanted to join the military. But it wasn't until senior year of high school that he realized he wanted to be a commissioned officer in the Marines. Doody was inspired by the Marine Corps' true warrior culture and brotherhood.

"The Marine Corps was the toughest thing I could attempt and put myself up against the toughest challenge in life," he said. "I want to earn the title Marine and carry on the legacy of all those brave men and women who have come before me."

Doody grew up in Richmond with his parents, two sisters and two brothers. His older brother graduated from ODU in spring 2019 and works as a contract specialist in the Army Corps of Engineers. One sister is a nurse and the other is a musician. Doody's younger brother just finished his junior year at VCU studying biomedical engineering.

In spring 2017, he transferred from John Tyler Community College. Homeschooled from K-12, Doody was equipped to get ahead in many subjects. He knew that ODU's Batten College of Engineering and Technology had a solid research reputation, an impressive array of faculty and was well-connected with the regional employers.

"Engineering is not easy. It requires a lot of time, commitment and discipline to complete the program," he said.

An athlete and sports enthusiast, his passion for baseball, lacrosse, volleyball, surfing and skateboarding may have



Doody

played a role in his desire to be an engineer.

"Through a love of sports, I began making sports equipment. I worked on stringing lacrosse sticks, designing skateboards and making surfboards," he explained. "I realized that my interests were always rooted in making things and bringing projects to completion. That's when I knew I wanted to pursue a degree in engineering."

Doody said he chose civil engineering because it involved design and construction at a larger scale and it has a direct impact on the lives of people. His interests include soil mechanics, hydraulics, fluid mechanics, environmental pollution and control, air quality, and water and wastewater treatment. In April, he took third place in the environmental design competition conducted by the Virginia Water Environment Association.

Doody said his greatest memory from his four years as a Monarch is the friendships he's made with his classmates. He knows they will last a lifetime.

"I credit much of my success to a small group of fellow civil engineering students," he said. "Also, there are many excellent professors in engineering. The one who made the most impact on me is Dr. Duc Nguyen."

Doody's extracurricular activities included the Environmental Engineering Student Association, ODU Young Life Organization, Student Government Association, Student Veterans Association, and the American Society of Civil Engineers.

Interest in engineering highway to success

by Cecilia Ramirez

Abbie Dean graduated from the Batten College of Engineering and Technology (BCET) with a Bachelor of Science degree in civil and environmental engineering and a minor in engineering management. While interning at Kimley-Horn in Virginia Beach, Va., Dean was offered a full-time job where she is responsible for signal timing optimization, information traffic fiber audits and multimodal lane management.

A Delaware native, Dean graduated high school from Padua Academy, an all-girls Catholic high school in Wilmington, Del. In middle school, Dean knew she liked science and math subjects. She excelled in these subjects with ease and confidence. She considered becoming a veterinarian, but that course changed towards high school when her parents introduced her to engineering. Both her mother and father worked in the transportation field. They understood that exposing her to various professions and industries would broaden her horizon to explore her potential.

In preparation for college, Dean toured several colleges. When she visited Old Dominion University it was love at first sight. She and her parents met Bonita Anthony, an academic advisor who at that time was part of the staff coordinating the college visits. Anthony immediately became a great resource for them, providing an overview of the engineering program.

Dean was impressed with how personable Anthony was.

"I felt that I mattered and that Ms. Anthony was interested in me as an individual and as a student," said Dean. "I had been to several colleges and universities and it was important for me to see diversity in engineering. Being a female in a field that is mostly men, it was nice to see the possibility of me thriving in that environment."

Anthony is still a mentor for Dean today. "Ms. Anthony has always been there for me to encourage me during challenging times. She frequently reminded me that I have come too far not to succeed," she said.

Engineering paved the path



Dean

Rafael Landaeta, associate dean for undergraduate programs, also became a mentor for Dean which made her feel like she was part of the BCET family. "Dr. Landaeta's support for my educational goals was inspiring," she said.

One of the most memorable experiences she had was the study abroad opportunity in Germany where students visited German companies and witnessed engineering technology from a global perspective.

Being an engineering student at ODU has enabled Dean to understand her strengths and weaknesses.

"The programs teach us to navigate difficult situations and provided us the tools to equip us in tackling some of the challenges that face us as engineers," she said.

Dean served as president of the BCET Student Ambassadors where she actively coordinated dozens of events for outreach and recruitment. She was also a member of the ODU American Society of Civil Engineers, National Council of Negro Women STEM (chair), Engineering Early Advantage Program, and Engineering Living and Learning Community (resident assistant).

Dean's other internship experiences include traffic engineering intern at Delaware Department of Transportation in Dover where she developed curve safety evaluations and constructed speed studies and crash analysis. She also interned at Busch Manufacturing LLC in Virginia Beach as the leader for the vision system inspection project and design.

Active leadership pays off

Student Board of Visitors Representative Stephen Greiling wants to give back

by Cecilia Ramirez

Stephen Greiling has a lot to be proud of. The Chesapeake, Virginia native received a Bachelor of Science degree in civil engineering with a GPA of 3.87, earning him distinct academic recognition. Greiling is an active member of the university community. He is the recipient of several other academic honors such as the National Society of Collegiate Scholars, Dean's List, Theodore F. Constance C. Constant Dominion Scholarship, Honors College and Order of Omega.

A student leader, Greiling serves as a student representative on the Old Dominion University Board of Visitors and is also a member of the ODU Homecoming Royal Monarch and National Society of Collegiate Scholars and the recipient of the REP ODU Unsung Hero and Evon-Broderick awards.

Greiling graduated from Grassfield High School in Chesapeake where he was a recipient of the Medal of Distinction in the Governor's STEM Academy. It was there he was introduced to engineering and architecture, engineering design and aerospace and experienced civil engineering at Rochester Institute of Technology in Rochester, New York.

"While both my parents are from the educational field, my introduction to engineering began when my two brothers got me involved in First Lego Leagues (FLL)," said Greiling. "Later I became interested in architecture and building designs.

"When I decided to pursue my education at ODU in 2016, I initially was looking for an architecture academic but I switched to civil engineering. During my freshman year, I was involved in the engineering learning community that provided me the opportunity to explore engineering and English composition simultaneously."

Randy Haddock and Kim Sibson, two of Greiling's first-year teachers, supported him in his pursuit of engineering and encouraged him to become involved on campus in a leadership role. He joined the Phi Kappa Tau fraternity and the Student Government Association in his first semester.

"My role as the student representative on the Board of Visitors was a great networking opportunity and afforded me to meet important stakeholders like state legislators, CEOs, and other community leaders," he said. "Being involved on campus grew my interest in higher education. I became interested in teaching or working with engineering students as a career. Kim Sibson became a mentor for me as I considered this career option and I could not ask for a better person to support me."

Having a leadership role in the university community enabled Greiling to engage with and help his fellow students transition to college. He says the reason he chose ODU over other academic institutions was that he believes the College takes an active role genuinely, most especially in student engagement, student success and access to quality education.

Last year, Greiling completed an internship at the Norfolk Naval Base in the Lifecycle Engineering, performing structural inspections on navy ships. In the last four years, Greiling has been exposed to many learning opportunities by becoming an engineering ambassador and conducting undergraduate research in coastal water management and water quality analysis in the watershed in Western Branch in Chesapeake. Greiling was accepted into the accelerated master's program in Environmental Engineering.



Greiling

Jessica Evans is a Navy veteran, military spouse and mother

Civil engineering technology major wins SolderStrong scholarship

by Sherry DiBari

Jessica Evans, a civil engineering technology major, went around the world on her way to Old Dominion University.

As a sonar technician in the Navy, Evans traveled to many places, including Singapore, Thailand, Dubai, Abu Dhabi and Bahrain before finally being stationed in Hawaii.

"We kind of grew up a little bit on the poor side, so I didn't really expect to ever travel outside of the United States, let alone be on a warship traveling to different countries," she said.

Evans is a recent recipient of a SoldierStrong Scholarship, an endowment gifted to the Batten College of Engineering and Technology and awarded to a female veteran with a high GPA in a STEM discipline.

She grew up in a small town in New Hampshire and didn't go to college right away.

"I was kind of lost at what I was going to do," she said.

Her grandfathers were military veterans. Her paternal grandfather served in Vietnam and her maternal grandfather served during World War II.

"I was thinking about a way to honor them and what they've done," Evans said. "The financial resources were also a big deciding factor. The GI Bill has been great in that aspect."

In high school, engineering was not on Evans' radar. She thought about becoming a chef or studying psychology. The Navy helped steer her toward engineering as she learned about the STEM-related jobs and possibilities onboard the ship.

"I think most of my life I wanted to make a difference in the world, whether that's a small difference or a big difference," Evans said. "In the Navy, you seem so small, like you're only one piece of the puzzle, but then you're also serving the greater good."

When Evans and her husband, who is active-duty Navy, relocated to Norfolk, she felt it was time to go back to school.

"I was researching schools in the area and looked into ODU and I saw how great their engineering program was, and how many options there were. It just seemed like a really good fit for me," Evans said.

She admits that having a spouse in the military and a 3-year-old while going to school is challenging.

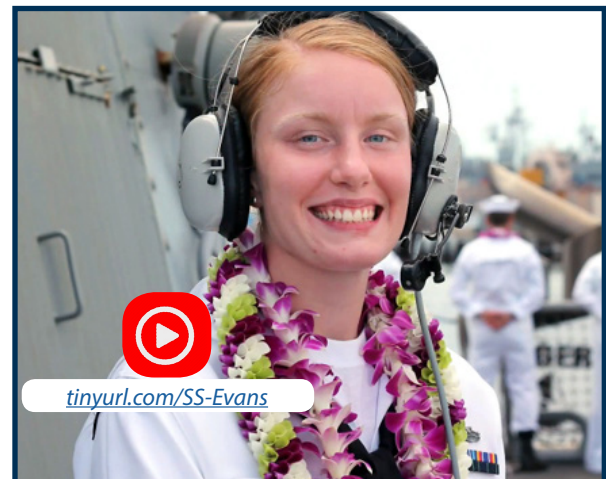
"It's really hectic. Most days I'm just getting through the day," she said. "But

it's also very rewarding because I am supporting my husband and his military career and I am also kind of supporting my son in showing him that it's never too late to go back (to school), or to start something."

After completing her bachelor's degree, Evans hopes to pursue a master's in engineering.

"Growing up, I never dreamed about going to college, let alone going as far as a master's degree," she said. "To have that opportunity to reach for my dreams, it's really special."

Hear more about Jessica Evans in this brief video.



Jessica Evans is shown during a promotion ceremony on the USS Hopper.

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The **illuminator** is a publication of the Batten College of Engineering & Technology

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