

# STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

## Q&A

**with Samantha Richert,**  
She/her/hers

Fourth-Year Industrial  
Engineering Student from  
Pleasanton, California



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**I wanted a program where I could also apply what I was learning in a hands-on way rather than just focusing on theory.**

### **What made you choose engineering?**

Growing up, I loved to tag along with my older brother when we tinkered around our house. We loved to fix up old ATVs, push around dirt with our dad's tractor and pick up new build projects around the house. I was also fortunate to attend an engineering program at my high school, which led me to pursue engineering in higher education. For me, it was a natural choice given the opportunities I had from my community.

### **Where do you like to hang out on campus?**

If it's a nice day, I like to sit on the grass near the engineering buildings between classes or hang out on Dexter Lawn for some sunshine and people-watching. Recently, I discovered the greenhouse in the atrium of Building 11 (Agricultural Sciences), which has quickly become my favorite spot on campus.

### **What are your hobbies?**

Outside of academics, I enjoy painting, reading, line dancing and spending time outdoors through activities like hiking, intramural sports and occasional camping trips. I also grew up doing snow and water sports, horseback riding and dirt biking, which I love getting back into when I'm home.

### **What has been your favorite class and why?**

I've loved engineering classes that involve building and hands-on work. IME 144: Introduction to Design and Manufacturing is a staple that really solidified my decision to pursue engineering at Cal Poly. More advanced courses I've enjoyed include IME 420: Simulation with Professor Zhiyuan Wei and IME 372: Applications of Enterprise Analytics with Professor Puneet Agarwal, both of which had final projects I'm genuinely proud of and have used in my summer internships. Just for fun in my final quarter, I'm also taking AG 243: Theory and Practice of Rodeo, as I grew up watching rodeos and can't wait to try it out for myself!

### **What is your favorite place in San Luis Obispo County and why?**

There are so many places in San Luis Obispo County that I've grown to love, but my favorite would have to be my own apartment with my roommates. While there are plenty of beautiful spots around SLO, it's really the people that make a place feel like home. Living with my roommates has been such a meaningful part of my college experience, and I'm incredibly grateful for the memories I've made with them.

### **Are you part of any extracurriculars on or off campus?**

My main academic hobby is serving as vice president of the aerospace engineering club Design, Build, Fly. In this role, I primarily act as a project manager, where I coordinate between subteams such as flight sciences and structures, support manufacturing efforts, manage finances, put on social events and oversee team operations. I joined halfway through my sophomore year to get a deeper understanding of aircraft components before my summer internship. The team welcomed me immediately, and I was able to jump straight into building. I'm grateful to now serve in a leadership role, and I make a point of encouraging engineering students of all disciplines to recognize that every type of skill brings value to a team.

### **Tell us about your internship experience.**

I recently completed two internships with Lockheed Martin, one as an operations engineering (OE) intern and one as an operations analyst (OA) intern. As an OE intern, my team focused more on process improvement initiatives. We worked with the manufacturing technicians to investigate problems within the manufacturing process and develop A3 reports. I also created manufacturing process flow maps in AutoCAD and supported the implementation of IT systems to improve part tracking.

As an OA intern, my work shifted more toward data analysis. I wrote SQL queries to extract and update datasets for high-level reporting and maintained dashboards that visualized various F-35 performance metrics. I also supported my team in building and maintaining simulations of the full manufacturing line.