

# FACULTY SPOTLIGHT



## 7 Questions with *Giovanni De Francesco*

Assistant Professor of Structural Engineering

Hometown: Messina, Sicily, Italy

### What brought you to the Cal Poly College of Engineering?

My big dream was to become an academic in the structural and earthquake engineering area in one of the parts of the world where engineering is more advanced. After working in Italy, Central America and New Zealand, Cal Poly is another place where I can continue to learn and improve as a professional engineer and a human.

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

San Luis Obispo is a beautiful town, and it reminds me of New Zealand, where I spent the last seven years of my life. I love the nature, and I like to have the opportunity to be close enough to beautiful cities like Santa Barbara, San Francisco and Los Angeles.

### What is your favorite part of your job?

I love interacting with students and doing research. Being an academic is a difficult and stressful job, but I always look forward to arriving at the office in the morning. This speaks to my passion for it.

### How does engineering apply to your daily life?

I would say that engineers are engineers in everything they do!

### Tell me about your research interests and why you are passionate about this topic.

On Dec. 28, 1908, my hometown of Messina was hit by a devastating earthquake and subsequent tsunami. The vast majority – more than 90% – of the structures in Messina were destroyed, and 75,000 people were killed. Although not a recent event, it is still in the memory of many people of my hometown, including myself. I always like to learn more about the behavior of structures during earthquakes and other natural hazards, and I love to work to find innovative solutions that improve the sustainability and seismic resilience of buildings and bridge structures.

### How do you encourage engineering students to make an impact on the community?

I try to help them understand that they are doing something important for themselves and for our community. Being a professional engineer is a privilege and a responsibility.

### How do you support the college's commitment to justice, equity, diversity and inclusion?

As a foreigner in the U.S. and as someone who has lived in several parts of the world, I have realized on the go how important integration is and how every one of us can give and receive from each other. We are all citizens of the world.



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