



SHARE YOUR MATE JOURNEY:

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MATE was my stepping stone to success. I was part of the University of Washington UnderWater Remotely Operated Vehicle (UWROV) team for the majority of my time in college. I consider this to be the experience that created every ocean engineering opportunity I have had since.

First of all, I chose my college major on a whim. Frankly, I did not know much more about oceanography than its name. It was a far stretch from what I had been doing before college. I was an art enthusiast and I did everything in the theater from backstage designing (sound, lighting, set, and props) to onstage as an actor. The theater defined who I was. But, when applying to college I decided that I wanted to do something related to science. When applying to the University of Washington I was scrolling through the list of majors trying to decide what I wanted to put down as 'intended major' on my application, and came across oceanography. After about ten minutes of reading Wikipedia I thought, 'This looks interesting and relevant to today's world issues,' and checked the box - Intended Major: Oceanography. My path was set.

Within the first two weeks of classes, I had joined UWROV, which was a team striving to build an ROV (remotely operated vehicle) to compete in the MATE competition. I was the only person on the team who was not an engineering or intended engineering major. The team did not mind though, and taught me everything that I needed to know to work on and contribute to our ROV. By the second month of my first quarter in college, we had the vehicle in basic working order and was testing the vehicle in the oceanography building's saltwater test tank. This is when I met my future boss for the first time, Rick Rupan. Rick was an advisor for UWROV and an engineer in the ARGO Lab at the University of Washington. Enthusiastic by my work on oceanographic sensing platforms and encouraged by how much I enjoyed working with robotics, I approached Rick about working in the ARGO Lab. After visiting the ARGO Lab at least once a week for a few months to show my enthusiasm, and absolute luck that their current student intern was graduating in June, I was hired at the end of January as a research assistant in the ARGO Lab.

For the rest of my time in college I continued to push myself to learn and achieve as much as I could. The MATE Competition contributed greatly to this. It is what kept the UWROV team on a deadline and pushed us to design for specific tasks. It challenged our creativity and design skills, always proving to the team that we had much more to learn. By the second year on the team, I had become the CEO of UWROV. Every experience I had on this team - working with engineers, late night design days, troubleshooting, how to make a melted cheese sandwich with a heat gun - contributed to make me who I am today.

I graduated from University of Washington in June 2017 with a degree in oceanography, but with my experience in UWROV and the ARGO Lab, I left college as an ocean engineering technician. I had gained the skill set that I needed to succeed. This proved to be true, as I was hired in July as an engineering technician at SeaBird Scientific working with NAVIS (a commercial float that is used in the ARGO program). Call it fate, destiny, or whatever you will, but when I started college, I was on a path that I did not even know existed nor could I have even dreamed, pushed down the road towards my future with MATE as the springboard to jumpstart my success.