

Ricardo Zapata

“Apart from graduation, I'd love to update you on some of the things I've been doing in school.

During my sophomore through Junior year at CU, I passed many theoretical classes. I've passed classes that range from statics and calculus up to Aerospace Electronics, Aerodynamics, Orbital Mechanics, and more. Finishing up my senior year, I've finished a senior project that I'm very proud of. The summary is that this is a fixed-wing UAV designed to fly autonomously to a desired destination without relying on GPS. It has been challenging at times. This team consisted of 49 people collaborating on research, design, integration, and testing. I was on the embedded software subteam. This year-long project has given me lots of experience in technical and interpersonal skills and exposed me to concepts far beyond the expertise I entered with. Recently, we presented this project at the College of Engineering and Applied Sciences Expo, and we should be getting some good photos and videos from that soon.

Apart from the Aerospace Engineering major, I've expanded my areas of interest, accomplishing both an Electrical Engineering and a Computer Science minor. I've taken all sorts of tough classes, like Circuits as Systems, Computer Systems, and creative classes like Computer Animation and Intro to VR. I've built a robot from scratch, and I've looked under the hood at what makes computers run. Growing up so focused on aviation, I would not have imagined a few years ago that I'd graduate with these extra skills under my belt, but I encourage any student to look beyond their focus and try things outside of what they think they want to do.

I'm still forming my path for after graduation, and despite being focused on the technical side of aerospace, I cannot wait to fly again and continue pursuing my pilot's license.

As always, I'd like to thank the Mile High Flight Program for helping to lay the foundation for where I am today and beyond.

Thank you, Ricardo Zapata”