

# Congratulations SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

WACA held its second year of the student scholarship competition. More than 30 students applied from schools across the state. Receiving more applications than anticipated, the board of directors was so impressed with the number of entries that they increased the number of scholarships from three to five recipients. To be eligible for the scholarship, candidates had to be pursuing a degree in construction management, construction engineering or architecture as a full-time student at the junior or senior level. Not only are these recipients highly academically inclined, but they have demonstrated a passion and commitment to the industry. We are proud to announce this year's recipients.



## **ARLEN HARTOONIAN**

**School:** California Polytechnic State University

**Major:** Construction Management

**Year:** Third

I was born in Glendale, Southern California, and moved to a small town called La Canada (Flintridge) four years later. La Canada has been my home for the past 17 years, except for the last three years, during which I

have been attending school in San Luis Obispo.

My passion for building initially convinced me to pursue a degree in architectural engineering. I was confident in that decision until I realized that my involvement with projects would involve more desk work than I expected. After this realization, I researched the construction management program at Cal Poly (San Luis Obispo) and took an instinctual leap of faith by changing my major. I soon learned that construction management was much more aligned with my interests — it was the combination of direct project involvement and challenge to my technical skills that I had sought all along. Now every time

I step into the classroom, I'm enthused by the course curriculum and reassured of my decision to pursue a career in construction.

My passion for construction management encourages me to explore beyond the required curriculum and allows me to attain a greater understanding of the subject. I strive to maintain my grades while expanding my knowledge and passion for this field of study. After graduation, I plan to work for a general contractor as a field engineer to educate myself about site operations, and then proceed to adopt roles that support the construction process itself. I believe that a better understanding of site operations will allow me to perform my duties as a project engineer and project manager more adeptly.

I want to share my accumulated knowledge and passion for construction with my peers and hope to one day become a construction business owner. This will allow me to build for my community and assist the next generation of students with financial aid. In doing this, I can reciprocate the encouragement for academic growth and generosity that was demonstrated to me through the WACA scholarship.



### JASPER ORTIZ

**School:** California State University, Sacramento

**Major:** Construction Management

**Year:** Third

I was born in Eugene, Oregon. My mother moved us to Grass Valley, California in 1988. As a single parent, she raised eight children on her own, working extremely hard to keep us all well fed and safe. My work ethic and passion for succeeding exist today because of her. I moved to Sacramento in 2010, where I currently reside with my wife and 1-year-old daughter.

For 15 years, I worked as a foreman for a residential concrete company. Although my expertise was in concrete, I spent time working in other trades as well. Through the years, I have found working in the construction industry to be rewarding. I enjoy the ability to use my creative side on different projects. I chose construction management because I'm interested in working on large-scale projects and believe that my extensive experience in the trades will enhance my ability to be an effective leader. I would love to become a project manager and have the privilege to someday contribute to building a staple structure in the city.

The two fields that currently interest me the most are high rise and civil construction. I look forward to working in a team setting, where I can learn from others while collaborating on projects. I look forward to broadening my understanding of the construction industry. I'm drawn to areas in construction where I can expand my knowledge because I enjoy development and growth.

Knowing that life takes many turns and our destination can change in a matter of seconds, if fate allows one day, my highest goal is to open my own construction company specializing in drywall and framing. In the future, I'd like to provide my employees with the best tools, training and techniques, so that they can work more effectively and in a safe environment. I hope my construction management studies will allow me to successfully manage a construction business and create innovative ideas to contribute to this amazing industry.



### DANIEL PEREZ

**School:** NewSchool of Architecture & Design

**Major:** Construction Management

**Year:** Fourth

I was born in Chula Vista, California, and raised in Tijuana, Baja California. I attended school in Mexico until the age of 15, when my parents decided it was time for my brother and me to learn English and work toward a better future. When I first started college I honestly did not know what I wanted to do, until one summer I worked construction with my dad as a laborer. That's when I decided I wanted to do something related to construction, but without physically sacrificing myself like my dad did to provide for his family.

During my career, I hope to elevate technology and software in the construction industry. I also look forward to mentoring individuals who are new to construction, as I would not have made it to where I am today without my mentors. During my time attending Cal Poly, I've had the opportunity to teach students through our Building Information Modeling (BIM) class. My primary career goal is to create a business centered around using technology in construction. I hope to use my passion for BIM and other cutting-edge technology to help the construction industry work smarter.



### MARY PINPIN

**School:** California Polytechnic State University

**Major:** Architecture

**Year:** Third

I was born and raised in Cavite, the Philippines, where many people from different socioeconomic classes live and work side-by-side as a united cultural community. My family immigrated to the United States in April

2012 because my parents believed that the United States was the best place to achieve our career goals. That same year I entered high school as a junior and attended a community college right after graduating. After finishing three years of community college, I transferred to Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo to further pursue my architecture goals.

Architecture, as I see it, creates a community that allows people to co-exist. It's a realm where we create spaces that allow for communication, a sense of belonging and safety. Where I grew up, my home of concrete walls and adequate protection was surrounded by unattractive shelters. In the Philippine areas that lack modern conveniences, people live in huts, squatter areas and shacks built with scavenged materials thrown together. Those living conditions not only ignited a flame in me to pursue architecture, but also taught me that community is achieved when people learn to exist together. Knowing that there are people in this world who don't have adequate physical resources makes me even more passionate to pursue architecture. It's my goal to graduate from college and obtain my degree from Cal Poly in June 2020. I would like to gain first-hand experience from bigger commercial companies that will teach me the practice of architecture in the real world. I chose this major because I want to be someone who gives back to her community by designing buildings that allow people to peacefully congregate.



### MATT WILLIAMSON

**School:** California Polytechnic State University

**Major:** Construction Management

**Year:** Fourth

I was born and raised in Mount Hope, New York. Mount Hope is a small town about 75 miles outside of New York City. From an early age, I was obsessed with building things. I would make buildings and cities from my

large Lego collection after school. When it came time for me to start looking at colleges and pick a major, I knew I wanted to be involved with the built environment in some capacity. I initially chose to major in architecture at Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo; however, after one quarter I decided architecture wasn't for me and switched to construction management. I appreciate how the construction management curriculum prepares dedicated students to become problemsolvers and future leaders in the construction industry.

During my career, I hope to elevate technology and software in the construction industry. I also look forward to mentoring individuals who are new to construction, as I would not have made it to where I am today without my mentors. During my time attending Cal Poly, I've had the opportunity to teach students through our Building Information Modeling (BIM) class. My primary career goal is to create a business centered around using technology in construction. I hope to use my passion for BIM and other cutting-edge technology to help the construction industry work smarter.