

BELONGING IN *ceat* with Wanying Zheng

Diversity and Inclusion Programs

Wanying Zheng is a junior majoring in Civil Engineering in the College of Engineering, Architecture and Technology (CEAT) at Oklahoma State University (OSU). Wanying chose to major in engineering due to her fascination with seismic activity on structures, and she hopes to one day design structures that can withstand earthquakes and other natural disasters. She chose to attend at Oklahoma State simply because “the people here are nice and CEAT made me feel that I was not just another engineering student.”



Wanying is a first-generation college student of color. Her family encouraged her to go into the medical field and become a doctor but she decided to pursue her own interests and goals by becoming a civil engineer. As a student, Wanying feels OSU CEAT is respectful of her ideas and interests which made a huge impact on her acclimating to the college her freshman year. The rigorous coursework is the most challenging and she usually overcomes the workload with late study nights, taking advantage of campus resources or calling her parents when she hits a wall. Wanying’s personal academic experiences have taught her to set goals, study hard, do research, join student organizations, and study abroad. She states, that OSU CEAT has granted her the ability to do all those things.

During her sophomore year, Wanying became involved in the local chapters of Engineers Without Borders (EWB) and the Society of

Asian Scientists and Engineers (SASE). She dedicated a lot of her time to SASE because it was newly established and she wanted to grow the membership. Now that she has a co-op, she is redirecting her attention to establish a SASE high school mentorship that would benefit young students interested in STEM and OSU. She states that by being involved in student organizations, she learned a lot from other cultures and backgrounds. She found the best way to connect with international students was to take the initiative and approach them because they were usually shy but once she did they had a lot of fun together. In supporting her peers, Wanying believes it is important to let her peers know she is available and to share resources.

Wanying shared that her co-workers, faculty members, friends, and parents have been a tremendous help throughout her CEAT career. She expressed that Dr. Mohammed Soliman, and Dr.



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Tyler Ley, in the Civil Engineering Department are passionate instructors who go above and beyond to help their students succeed even though they are busy with their own research. Wanying said, they care about the well-being of their students and that motivates her to push herself.

Lastly, the support that has impacted her the most is from her parents. She states that they continue to push her to do better and work harder. Their story and faith in her are powerful and inspirational. And while she doesn't think she will ever measure up to their work, they have set a great example for her in pursuit of her civil engineering career.

Wanying's advice to freshman is to embrace this new chapter and be ready to accept challenges and failures with an open mind. She says that not everything will go your way, but that it is the process of learning and growing. Her advice is to use your resources and take advantage

of all the opportunities that come your way. She also encourages to start understanding and reciprocating engineering humor early (the drier, the better), it will make life easier.

Wanying says that inclusion is the importance of every individual and that everyone matters. She is thankful for the continuous efforts and resources to help diverse

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students be successful. Wanying said, that Yoko Speight, Coordinator of CEAT Diversity and Inclusion Programs helped her through a lot of struggles as a CEAT student and that Yoko's encouragement has been

inspirational for diverse students like herself. Wanying concluded, there is no idea or person that does not matter as a future engineers. Being acceptable of different backgrounds, cultures, and ideas helps everyone feel included, makes a good leader, and more importantly a good friend.

Wanying Zheng belongs in CEAT because it is an inclusive place for her to grow and learn.

Belonging In CEAT is a Diversity and Inclusion publication that highlights academic experiences of students in the College of Engineering, Architecture and Technology at Oklahoma State University.

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