

BELONGING IN *ceat*

with Torie Richardson



Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Programs



Torie Richardson is a senior in Industrial Engineering and Management here at the College of Engineering, Architecture and Technology. Torie's dad was the first black man to graduate from the University of Missouri - Kansas City with his Pharmacy Degree. Her parents met while they were in school and her mother was pursuing her medical degree. Torie says her parents never put a limit on the

things she could do - she has wanted to be a singer/actress, a judge, a lawyer, a fiction writer, and finally, an engineer once she realized in high school that physics and math were really fun, fascinating subjects.

Growing up in Kansas City, Torie didn't really know Oklahoma State was an option. Torie went to a college fair and a recruiter had personally emailed her and invited

her to go on a tour. She realized OSU was special, because she never once felt like another number. Torie felt valued for what she brought to the table and coming to OSU was the natural choice!

Torie says that learning opportunities both inside and outside the classroom have been limitless. She will never forget attending the CEAT Diversity Banquet in 2017 that



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featured Raye Montague, an incredible black woman credited with creating the first computer-generated rough draft of a U.S. naval fleet. Torie was able to meet her, and remembered thinking how cool it was to be in the presence of a real life Hidden Figure. Torie has worked very hard to try to follow in the footsteps of women like her.

When asked what support she has received as a CEAT student, Torie says that the RISE program at OSU has taught her to not be afraid to ask for help and to study hard. She recommends it to all incoming freshman or transfer students from diverse backgrounds. Torie says she has spent countless hours in the MLSC doing math homework as a freshman, sophomore and even junior. She has also made countless appointments at the LASSO center for help with her science classes. The most impactful support Torie says she has received has been from the student community. Her classmates are also her best friends, and late night study sessions with them have been some of her favorite memories.

Torie graduated high school as a National Merit Scholar and National Honor Society Chair. She had expected engineering to be difficult, but knew she had her academics covered. What she had not expected was the physical and mental health problems that would set her back three semesters. One of the hardest decisions she had to make was to withdraw from school sophomore year to go home and get treatment. She now realizes that the decision should have been easy, considering the pain she was in, but was afraid of what others would think of her being behind in school. Torie says having to withdraw shows how hard she had to work for her degree and how driven she is to push through even when it gets hard. She says that it was important for her to take the time to get treatment when she was sick and sometimes "pushing through" means making hard decisions like going home for a while and not risking your health to meet others expectations.

When Torie was a freshman, she was in a Living Learning Community for women in engineering called Maude's Quad. Professor Carissa Ramming invited them to dinner to learn more about her and OSU, and Torie remembers thinking that she was the coolest professor ever. And turns out she is! Torie says she has been able to talk to Professor Ramming about her struggles and had real conversations. She has even talked with her about addressing her own biases so she can become a better person and professor. Torie says it is not every day you meet someone who is willing to challenge their own views in order to grow as a person and that Dr. Ramming is someone who inspires her here at OSU.

Torie is involved in a range of different organizations here at OSU. She is the New Member Coordinator for CEAT Student Council this year, which she has been involved with Student Council as a freshman in



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Freshman Council, as well as being on the Relations Committee, Policy Committee, and served as the CEAT Student Representative for the OSU Grade Appeals Board. Torie has seen Student Council grow more diverse year after year, and she is thrilled to be able to work with such incredible students. As a Relations Committee member, Torie is able to help plan new events for students of diverse backgrounds. For example, one of her friends came up with the "International Student Social," where they brought in OSU Career Services to talk to international students about

landing a job and getting involved on campus. It was a great success and she believes we need students with diverse backgrounds on Student Council to properly address student needs.

If Torie could give advice to someone pursuing a degree in engineering, architecture, or engineering technology, she would say doing your best in school is only possible if you are at your best physically and mentally. Take care of yourself and follow your own path. It's okay if you need to take a mental health day to yourself. It's okay if you need to go

home. Eat well, get enough sleep, and limit the amount of time you spend on your phone (especially when you are studying).

For Torie, Inclusion is speaking up and listening. It's realizing your voice is important, but not more important than anyone else's. It's realizing you know a lot, but you don't know everything, and your journey is your own, just like everyone else's.

Torie belongs in CEAT because of all the Hidden Figures that paved the way for her to be here, like Raye Montague or Nancy Randolph Davis.

