

My name is **Gabriela Bernal** and I am currently pursuing a masters degree in Materials Science and Engineering at Stanford University.

Educational History:

- Colegio Ismar (Mexicali, Baja California, Mexico)- {1995-1999}
- Ben Hulse Elementary School (Imperial, CA)- {1999-2002}
- Frank Wright Middle School (Imperial, CA)- {2002-2004}
- Imperial High School-Valedictorian (Imperial, CA)- {2004-2008}
- UC Santa Barbara- Chemical Engineering, B.S. (Santa Barbara, CA)- {2008-2012}
- Stanford University- Materials Science & Engineering, M.S. (Stanford, CA)- {2012-2014}

Employment History:

- Imperial Valley Environmental Laboratory-Lab Technician Volunteer- {Summer 2009}
- UC Santa Barbara- Organic Photovoltaic Research Intern- {Summer 2010}
- California Institute of Technology- Liquid Crystal Research Intern- {Summer 2011}
- AVS, Santen Inc.- Research and Development Intern- {Senior year 2011-2012}
- MIT Lincoln Lab- Research Intern- {Summer 2012 & 2013}

Leadership Experience:

- Society of Women Engineers Vice President- UCSB- {2009-2012}
- College of Engineering Student Council Chair- UCSB- {2011-2012}
- Stanford Polymer Collective Vice President- Stanford University- {2013-2014}

My Journey:

The notion that I could be an engineer was first presented to me in the MESA program. Before being part of the program, I had had many career dreams: being a teacher, lawyer, interior designer. However, it wasn't until I was part of MESA that I seriously considered pursuing a career in engineering. I didn't really know what engineers did, and due to the lack of women engineers I was told by an uncle who is an engineer that engineering was not really for me. I decided to become informed and the summer after my junior year I enrolled in a personal development class at Imperial Valley College (IVC) where I was given the chance to explore many career options. After taking that class, I decided that engineering was for me and that I would pursue a degree in chemical engineering, looking back on it I am glad that I stuck with a degree in Science Technology Engineering Mathematics (STEM).

Chemical engineering was a great fit for me since it is a broad enough major which has a lot of career options. A lot of my classmates went on to get jobs in chemical plants working on the production of chemicals such as house hold cleaners, polymer resins and even plastics for the interiors of airplanes. I decided to continue my education and pursue a masters in materials science and engineering. This masters program has allowed me to increase my knowledge of renewable energy materials, biomaterials, and electronic devices. Throughout my journey in school, I have had the opportunity to work in all of these types of materials and have enjoyed working on biomaterials the most.

In the future I see myself working for a biotech company where my engineering degrees can be put to use to help people with medical issues. For me, that was the main motivator in pursuing engineering, knowing that my work could be beneficial and helpful to society.