

Arhison Bharathan

Fast Track Student of the Month

Born:

Woodland Hills, California

High School:

Simi Valley High School, Simi Valley, CA

Outside Interests:

Lifting, Guitar, Tennis, Frank Ocean

Siblings:

Older brother

When did you know you wanted to be an ECE?

When I was in middle school, I developed an interest in Arduino prototyping. Learning basic circuits and programming from tutorials and projects I found on the internet, I accumulated experience and knowledge that I could use to make some genuinely interesting projects. The chance for me to put my skills to the test came up in a class project; making a bottle rocket parachute deployment mechanism. While other groups put together a simple timer to launch the parachute, I took it upon myself to make a custom circuit to launch the parachute right at apex instead. My efforts ultimately failed (high school physics was the key to my success when I revisited the project!) but, going through the process of taking a ‘product’ like this from an idea to implementation turned out to be one of the most exciting and interesting things I’d ever done. It was after this experience that I knew I wanted to be an ECE.

Who has influenced you most in your choice of your academic field?

My dad, a mechanical engineer, seems to have always made it a point to show my brother and I what he was doing at work. Always bringing things home to show and—if we were lucky—let us take apart, he had both of us building the mindset and curiosity of an engineer from a young age. I’m sure that by doing this, it was his master plan to get us interested and hooked into some kind of STEM career all along. And from the looks of it, he definitely succeeded!



Why did you choose the UCLA EE program?

Entry into the Fast Track program was probably the most enticing reason for me to choose UCLA. Having contact with faculty members on a more personal level and being guaranteed access to world class research were very hard to turn down. Outside of that, the opportunity to live in a place as exciting as Los Angeles, while still being an hour from home, seemed like a pretty good deal as well.



How is it being on a big campus so far?

When I first got here, the layout of the school (especially of the engineering buildings) and the opportunities presented by clubs were a bit daunting. However, as classes and club activities (weightlifting and Bruin Racing) started to pick up, I found that the school seemed to almost shrink in size. Keeping my schedule packed with things I'm interested in, I feel like the school's size has really conformed to what I am comfortable with.

What are you interested in as a career?

Career-wise, I'm still unsure where I'd like to end up. Through the various projects I've taken on, I've found embedded systems to be a field that really interests me. However, I don't want to jump the gun on choosing what field of EE I'd like to specialize in yet. Looking around online, in the news, and here at UCLA, fields like nanostructures, semiconductors, and even more software-oriented areas like machine learning have all piqued my curiosity. Over the next



few years, I want to explore these areas and others to make sure I find the niche of EE best suited to me.