



# Alexander Castaneda, PhD

## PhD in Mechanical Engineering

As a Presidential Fellow at WPI, Alexander is able to devote his full attention to his graduate work in [mechanical engineering](#). The prestigious fellowship brought him to campus after he completed undergraduate work at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

Moving from a larger school to a smaller one brings opportunities Alexander never expected. Whether it's the genuine friendships with fellow soccer players at the Sports & Rec Center or the close guidance of his advisor Yagoobi, the connections he's forming at WPI are supportive and authentic and make him feel like a valued part of the community.

Much of the material Alexander is learning as part of his PhD work is applied directly to his research efforts, including running experiments with NASA. With the majority of his days spent in the multi-scale heat transfer lab, his research-focused graduate program offers opportunities that help him take steps toward achieving his professional career goal—he wants to work as a research engineer on NASA's thermal control systems.

### Hometown

Cottage Grove, WI, USA

### Mentor/Advisor

- [Jamal Yagoobi](#)

### Achievements

- Presidential Fellowship

### Interests

- Indoor/outdoor soccer
- Running
- Weightlifting
- Cooking
- Reading

Working closely with [Professor Yagoobi](#), Alexander has already mastered and applied what he is learning to real-world applications, and he looks forward to continuing that throughout his graduate studies at WPI. He says he considers himself fortunate to realize the value of this close-knit research community, one aligned with ambitious, forward-facing goals.

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**WPI's smaller size allows one to develop stronger relations with faculty and other students, allowing for a better overall experience. ”**

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