

# Sloan Career Cornerstone Center

## Profiles of Engineering Students



### Samuel Russell Sorenson

**Engineering Student**  
**California State University Northridge**  
**Northridge, CA**

#### **Education in Progress:**

Senior, Bachelor of Science in Computer Engineering, California State University Northridge

#### **Advice to Students:**

"Do a lot of research about the different fields of study offered. In order to be successful you need to make sure that you will enjoy the major you choose."

#### **Interview:**

▶ **Q:** When did you know you wanted to become an Engineer?

▶ **Sorenson:** My whole life I have liked taking things apart and seeing how they worked. When I started looking at colleges engineering seemed like a good fit.

▶ **Q:** What is your college experience like in terms of the amount of time you find you need to study each day?

▶ **Sorenson:** Study time varied depending on the class. A couple of hours a day outside of class was sufficient for most classes. Some classes, especially around exam time, required a lot more study time.

▶ **Q:** Are you incorporating any work experiences while you are a student? (include both internships/co-ops and any other jobs you may be holding while in school)

▶ **Sorenson:** While in school I held a part-time retail position. Although the experience is not directly related to my field of study, the customer service experience that I acquired is a good addition to my resume.

▶ **Q:** How did you prepare for your college experience?

▶ **Sorenson:** Since no other members of my immediate family have received a college degree, I decided that the best way to prepare for a university was to go to a community college for a couple years and then transfer into a four year university. During my time at the two year college I was able to decide on which field of study I was interested in. Once I transferred to CSUN I had enough college experience to successfully complete my classes.

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Prepared as part of the Sloan Career Cornerstone Center ([www.careercornerstone.org](http://www.careercornerstone.org))

- ▶ Q: Did/do you have a mentor that has helped guide you thus far? (If so, describe the impact of this person on your education and career plans)
- ▶ Sorenson: My parents are the people that have had the most impact in my education and career plans. They have supported me every step of the way. They were a major factor that helped me decide where to go to school and what to study.
- ▶ Q: Is there a specialty area you have focused on in engineering? If so, what is it, and how did you decide on this specialty? Also, at what point in your college experience did you decide?
- ▶ Sorenson: My degree is a Bachelor of Science in Computer Engineering. This degree covers a lot of the material that both Computer Science and Electrical engineering covers. I decided on this degree while at Community College because I took software programming classes and really enjoyed them. I also took math and science classes that I really enjoyed. The Computer engineering degree allowed me to study both subjects and gave me more options when finding a career.
- ▶ Q: Is it hard to balance your engineering studies with other college activities (entertainment, travel, having fun)?
- ▶ Sorenson: Sometimes it is difficult to balance studying for school with having fun. Finding friends within your field of study helps because your schedules usually are similar.
- ▶ Q: Do you find yourself studying more in a team situation or alone? Do you have a preference?
- ▶ Sorenson: Study groups are a staple in college. Having a group of people, each with different strengths and weaknesses, helps a lot. If one person is kind of weak on a subject, another person in the group that is strong can help them. Individual study time is extremely important as well. If you cannot study on your own, it is very difficult to get good grades on exams.
- ▶ Q: What's the hardest thing you have found about your college experience working toward a degree in engineering?
- ▶ Sorenson: Time management is one of the hardest things about college. You need to be able to devote enough time to each class you are taking. A lot of the time exams for all your classes will fall on or around the same day. If you don't manage your time well, you won't have enough of it to go around.
- ▶ Q: What's the most rewarding aspect about working toward a degree in engineering?
- ▶ Sorenson: There are many things that are rewarding about working toward a degree in engineering. You form a good group of friends whom have similar goals. You get hands on experience through lab experiments.
- ▶ Q: Do you think you'll continue studying engineering, or do you think you'll switch to another area? Why?
- ▶ Sorenson: I will definitely continue studying engineering. In order to stay in demand as an engineer you have to continuously expand your knowledge on your field.
- ▶ Q: Do you have any idea what sort of industry or work you'd like to do when you graduate? If so, how did you find out about this industry or field?
- ▶ Sorenson: I want to find a career that integrates both hardware and software design. I could do one or the other, but being able to use everything that I have learned is most appealing.

- ▶ Q: Do you think you'll want to pursue additional degrees after you complete the one you are working on? Why or why not?
- ▶ Sorenson: After working for a couple of years I plan on going back to school to get a master's degree.
  
- ▶ Q: Did you think that school will prepare you for the way the work gets done in the real world?
- ▶ Sorenson: Through the many team and individual projects I have completed while at CSUN, I believe I have a good idea how work gets done in the real world.
  
- ▶ Q: How many engineering schools did you apply to? How many accepted you?
- ▶ Sorenson: I only applied to two engineering schools, and was accepted to both. I decided before applying that I wanted to remain at home with my family, so I only applied to local engineering schools. From what I heard before applying for schools CSUN had an excellent engineering program.
  
- ▶ Q: Did you have a "first choice?" Were you accepted into your "first choice?"
- ▶ Sorenson: Based on the location and reputation CSUN was my first choice.
  
- ▶ Q: How did you decide which college/university to go to?
- ▶ Sorenson: I chose the school that was closest to home.
  
- ▶ Q: What should high school students be doing to prepare themselves to take on the work that engineering students do?
- ▶ Sorenson: High school students should work on not procrastinating when it comes to school work. Leaving things for the last minute makes it really difficult to get good grades and adds a lot more stress than necessary. High school students should also get into the habit of taking good notes in class. Teachers usually put a lot of time in their lectures to make sure they cover everything the student needs to know, having good notes on the lectures really helps during midterms and finals.