

Tara Kimbel

Civil Engineering

Hometown: East Canton, Ohio

Professional/Student Organizations:

- STEM
- American Society of Civil Engineers
- Increasing Diversity in Engineering Academics (IDEAs)

Co-op/Research Experience

- GPD Group



Why did you choose the University of Akron?

I chose to attend The University of Akron for a couple different reasons. The most appealing aspects of UA was that it is a highly ranked engineering college and I loved that it was close to home. My two brothers also went to UA and studied engineering; therefore, I was able to see firsthand how great it was. Also, the constant outreach from UA staff intrigued me. From the time I started until now, there has never been a shortage of support from the faculty.

Why did you choose Civil Engineering as your major?

My entire life I had a very strong engineering influence. My dad was a Mechanical Engineer and later both my brothers followed in his footsteps and also became Mechanical Engineers. Although I knew I also wanted to become an engineer, I wanted to follow a different route. I chose Civil Engineering because I knew I would never be limited in my career options. I love the outdoors and with Civil Engineering I could follow a path that would allow me to mix that love with my job. I also was intrigued by the broad scope of Civil Engineering and how many different things you can do with a Civil Engineering degree.

What advice would you give to an incoming engineering student?

The best advice I could give would be the importance of learning how to study. Many students didn't have to study much in high school in order to receive high grades. However, college, especially engineering, is different. I struggled at the beginning because I didn't know how to study. It took me some time to figure out the techniques that worked for me and to realize that I actually needed to study. My grades were impacted my first semester so figuring this out early will help you.

Who was the one person that really inspired you here at UA and why?

Dr. Julie Zhao, the IDEAs director, was one of the biggest reasons I chose UA. I had told her that I was interested in engineering and she was huge support to me when I was still trying to decide what I wanted to do with my career. I remember receiving emails from her my senior year and taking such comfort knowing I had someone supporting me before I even began school. College has a lot of unknowns for someone that is still in high school, but for me Dr. Julie was a tremendous help in easing all the fears I had.