HARD WORK AND LOTS OF PLAY

Job Shadowing his science teacher as a high school freshman changed Joseph Espinosa’s path for his future. He witnessed his teacher, at Bishop-Garrigan High School in Algona, helping students learn and loving teaching. Joseph’s teacher influenced how he wants to live his own life—helping others and enjoying what interests him. It was this point that Joseph decided that he wanted to become a science teacher. Joseph is the youngest child of his family and the only one who has gone to college.

As a high school senior, a friend convinced Joseph to come to Cedar Falls to visit the UNI campus. He found that he loved the atmosphere and the smaller campus. Joseph is now in his sophomore year as an All-Science Education major. Living in a residence hall on campus, Hagemann Hall, has also been an integral part of his life on campus. His experience so far has been difficult at times, because some of the classes are challenging, but he keeps working at it and will not be deterred from his goals.

Chemistry courses are his favorite courses overall. Joseph truly enjoyed the hands on experiments of the General Chemistry courses, especially when having to use math for the quantitative portion of the experiments. One of the interesting projects he has had in his coursework was in his Organismal Diversity Biology course. Groups had to design the most disgusting seed possible using items such as candy, hot sauce and tape so that the plant eaters would not want to eat it. Next, the plants “dispersed” their seeds by throwing them or dropping them, just like a plant would. Then the plant eaters had a limited amount of time to find all the seeds. Joseph’s team won because no one found one of their seeds.

Joseph works at the Piazza and has some fun outside of the classroom. You may find him working in the Sizzle or Wok areas of the dining hall. He is part of the Northern Iowa Gaming Collective Board Games who meets every Thursday night in the Library. Joseph is a part of the Panther Table Top Club, who play card games and other board games. He is also a lower executive member of the Panther eSports as the Hagemann Hall coordinator. As coordinator, he works with other hall coordinators to organize the Inter-Dorm competition. Panther eSports also organizes and hosts the UNICON event on campus every November (https://www.facebook.com/groups/Panther.eSports/).

Getting the most out of your college experience is important to Joseph, which is why he would like to become part of the residence hall staff. Just like in the classroom, Joseph wants to help incoming students adjust to college life and grow their leadership opportunities. He has observed that many students stay in their rooms and he wants to encourage participation on campus. For students interested in STEM majors, he says, “It is going to be difficult, but don’t let that deter you. Just keep working hard. Talk to your teachers. Talk to your professors. They will help you if you need help.” After he graduates, Joseph would like to teach in the Algona area and save up to see Ireland and Spain.

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Joseph Espinosa on pursuing a STEM major at UNI.

Joseph Espinosa, All-Science Education Major and First Generation College Student.

Joseph volunteering at UNICON in the Maucker Union in November 2017.

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