Cody Law was in high school then. He was part of the Upward Bound Math and Science Program at the University of Northern Iowa. There, he came to know about the UNI Science Symposium.

“I was informed that the symposium awarded scholarships in the fields of natural science,” he recalls. “I participated and was awarded a scholarship in the field of Physics.”

Law enrolled in the Department of Physics in the fall of 2001.

The undergraduate coursework at UNI was much more difficult than what he had done in high school, he says. “High school came very easy to me and I hadn’t learned how to study or take decent notes.”

The undergraduate coursework involved working on interesting projects, too.

“One of the more interesting projects that I worked on in college was during a robotics class I took,” he says.

“We built autonomous miniature sumo robots that we competed with at the end of the course. I learned quite a bit in that class about sensors, programming, logic, and strategy.”

He used much of the experience that he gained in electronics and robotics when he started to work as a technician after graduating in the spring of 2006 with a Bachelor of Science degree in Applied Physics.

As he moved into engineering, Law began to appreciate his UNI education even more. “Much of what I learned in college was less about specific knowledge and more about helping me understand the concepts I was learning in my role as an engineer,” he says.

UNI education has also given him the tools to handle the challenges that continue to come his way, he adds.

“One of those tools is work ethic. The projects I work on now have deadlines that are months into the future, yet progress needs to be made continually if those deadlines are going to be met.”

Law has been working at John Deere for nine years and is now a new product development engineer. He coordinates feasibility builds and maintains the miscellaneous test fleet for the 9R series tractors. He also works with the onsite machine shop to have prototype parts fabricated for the design engineers.

“The thing I like most about my job is that I spend most of my time on my feet and working on the shop floor rather than behind a desk all day,” he says.

Law has meanwhile obtained a Professional Science Master’s degree in Applied Physics from UNI, starting in the fall of 2010 and graduating in the spring of 2014.

He believes students should take the opportunities they have in middle school and high school, and explore as many different fields of study as they can.

“Take shop class, music, and art,” he says. “Find what drives you. It’s so much easier to learn a subject if you find a passion for it.”

Mini sumo robots... building one of these was a high point in Cody Law’s undergraduate years at UNI.

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