



HOPING TO MAKE THE WORLD A BETTER PLACE

Jake Parks enjoys learning how the physical world works; he has perpetually been in awe about the infinitude of the universe and its intricacy. So, the decision to major in physics was not difficult for him to make.

The decision to enroll in the University of Northern Iowa was not difficult, either; he found the sense of community here overwhelming.

"People here, from students to faculty, truly care about you," Jake says. "It makes the intimidating experiences of college much more manageable."

In fact, the experience has been awesome for him.

"I have met a lot of really great people, learned some really important things both in and outside the classroom, and made some close friends within a very short time of my stay here," he says. "I hope to keep doing so."

The undergraduate coursework has been challenging but fulfilling.

"I has been hard majoring in physics," Jake admits.

"However, when a tough subject finally clicks for me, and I can explain it to others and apply it, it is so fulfilling."

Modern Physics has been his favorite class so far.

"It is an entirely different way of looking at physics, making me rethink everything that I thought I knew," he says. "It is difficult but cool."

Modern Physics has also been part of a unique experience for Jake.

"In one of the Modern Physics labs, we performed a famous experiment where we determined the charge-to-mass ratio of an electron," he recalls. "It was so cool because the original experiment won its creators the Nobel Prize, and to think that we got to replicate their work in our lab was sweet, in a really nerdy way."

Jake is a serious student, alright. "I work for the physics department as a tutor for Physics 1 and 2 students," he

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Jake Parks



Jake Parks, left, with friends at a UNI Panthers game

says. "It is a great way for me to stay sharp on my basic physics knowledge while making some extra spending/saving money."

But he is no nerd. "I love to sing, laugh, and perform; so, I am part of the Men's Glee Club here at UNI," he says. "I also love to play basketball at the WRC [Wellness and Recreation Center] with friends."

Jake also volunteers for the Office of Admissions as a Student Admissions Ambassador.

Student Admissions Ambassadors showcase UNI to "prospective and admitted students," he explains. "We also perform community service events such as volunteering at the food bank and cleaning up highways."

He has recently signed up as a STEM Ambassador, too.

"The physics department has been very good to me and has given me a lot of opportunities so I thought becoming a STEM ambassador would be a good way to give back," he says.

After graduating from UNI, Jake plans to get a degree in mechanical engineering from the University of Iowa before starting to work full time.

Jake believes STEM subjects are both "challenging and fulfilling, and can be used to change the world for the better."

"Whether it is an engineer who finds a way to manufacture something more efficiently, or an actuary who saves a family money with an insurance policy, there is always a way that STEM majors are making the world a better place," he explains.

So, his advice for middle and high school students interested in STEM majors is: "Go for it."