

CLASS OF FALL 2022

Outstanding Graduates

DAWSON VANTERRANCE DRAKE – College of Engineering

“I want to make a positive impact on society by designing and creating things that will change and improve the lives of the people around me.”

Dawson Vanterrance Drake will graduate from NMSU this fall with a Bachelor of Science in Electrical Engineering and Computer Science, maintaining a 4.0 GPA through his academic journey. He earned a position in The Center for Countermeasures in 2019 and is a member of the Physical Science Laboratory (PSL) CREW Cohort for 2020-22. He currently holds a student position at PSL in the telemetry systems area.

A native of Berkeley, California, Dawson moved with his family to Las Cruces when he was just three years old, and now considers this his home. As a child, he always had an interest in building things and understanding how they work, so becoming an engineer was an easy choice. He chose to attend New Mexico State because he grew up less than 10 minutes from the campus and developed a strong connection with the NMSU community. He also recognized early on that NMSU strives to help its students succeed, confirming his belief that becoming an Aggie would be a great fit for him.

Because of his strong interest in technology, Dawson chose to major in electrical engineering, but he found that computer science also aligned well with the subjects he was interested in pursuing. He became the co-lead for the Atomic Aggies avionics team in 2021 and 2022, which required him to oversee the design and development of the avionics system for the competition rocket. In addition, he served as the point of contact for collaboration with other teams from around the world.

Dawson has participated in public events with the Atomic Aggies, such as going to local fairs and events to display the rocket and sub-systems to the public. He has also been the leader of STEM outreach events at local schools, encouraging younger students to get involved with STEM-related activities.

Following graduation, Dawson plans to seek a master’s degree in electrical engineering, after which he hopes to pursue a career in the space industry. He hopes to shape the future by using the experience he gained at NMSU to create positive changes in society, giving back to the community that helped him succeed.