

What were your expectations when you started at CHTM? Did they change, and how?

My expectations of CHTM, grad school in general in New Mexico, I thought it was gonna be this mecca for intellectuals and CHTM definitely was that. There's a lot of really smart people here and they're all really open when you want to talk, too. Because we're so far away from main campus, it really allows us our own space to get together and do some cool science. I thought New Mexico was going to be a terrible place to live, moving from California. But actually New Mexico is super fun and is really awesome. I've been here for 7 years and I really miss this place.

Do you think CHTM provided enough support for you during and after your PhD?

Yea, definitely. So, there's a lot of smart professors here, like Steve Brueck, obviously, my advisor Kevin, Daniel and a lot other people and no matter who I ran into in the hallways they were always willing to talk to me about my research or their research and give me ideas and help. Chris Hains, who was here for a long time, used to come in and help me with my projects. Everyone is willing to help you fix equipment and stuff, so throughout my whole PhD, everyone was always supportive of what I wanted to study and getting things working for me, so that was pretty cool. And Joel and the facility guys, every time you needed anything, facilities wise, they would get it done. That was pretty awesome

Can you name 3 things that CHTM contributed positively to your life as a student?

So the three biggest things, one was the freedom to do my research. Being here at UNM, and also being a sort of smaller research institution, there was a lot of freedom in terms of what I wanted to research. Doing my research and collaborating with who I wanted to collaborate with and that was really great.

The seminars here are really awesome. Because we are in the middle of two national labs and a major university. So we get a lot of cool speakers that come out and share some really good ideas.

And then, probably everyone's willingness to cooperate. So whenever I needed help, with anything in my lab, or just had general questions about my project, or anyone's project really, everybody was super willing to help out. Which I think really helped me develop as a student.

What would you tell a student that wants to start their graduate studies at CHTM? What advice would you give them?

My number one advice, would be to reach out to people. You can lead a horse to water but you can't make it drink. I think the same goes with CHTM. You get out what you put into it. And so we have a lot of resources here, with Sandia being close by, and all the great professors here and graduate students. Really, if you just take the time to get to know anyone and really ask people to help you out and just get to know them, you can learn a lot about your field and other interesting fields while you are here.

Do you feel UNM and CHTM prepared you for life after being a student?

Definitely. One of the major things that CHTM is not only to do great science but also give you a lot of freedom and independence. So in that sense, you have to go out and you have to ask people for what you want to do. You have to sort of, drive your own research, and that has been

my number one thing now that I'm working for Intel. No one tells me what to do, I have to go there every morning and figure out what I'm going to do and talk to people. And I think that was the number one thing that CHTM and grad school taught me.