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UM Education Gives Swedish Graduate Student Confidence

Civil engineering major Torkel Nord Bjaememan says he's prepared to succeed at any workplace

MARCH 7, 2019 BY EDWIN B. SMITH

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Torkel Nord Bjaememan takes a break from his graduate assistant duties to enjoy bicycling. Submitted photo

OXFORD, Miss. – Five years ago, Torkel Nord Bjaememan came to the **University of Mississippi** in search of a quality education. The native of Gothenburg, Sweden, who earned his civil engineering degree and is in graduate school, said he feels ready to succeed at any workplace in the world.

“I have firsthand experience that the level of education one gets here matches that of any great technical institution,” said Nord Bjaememan, who after his junior year had a summer internship at a major technical consulting firm and employer for young professional engineers in Sweden.

“There, I was able to interact with students pursuing graduate degrees in structural engineering at one of the top technical institutions, along with young professionals,” he said. “I was pleased that I had no difficulties in understanding their work tasks. I was also able to work independently on my own tasks and actively engage in discussions.”

Nord Bjaememan has been part of the **UM Center for Graphene Research and Innovation** since its creation in 2017. It focuses

on bridging the gap between university-based science and discovery and industry-led innovations and applications for graphene, a form of carbon made of a single layer of atoms.

First isolated and described by scientists in 2004, the material is incredibly strong and flexible, and its conductivity lends it to a broad range of applications from manufacturing to electronics to medicine.

As a research assistant for the CGRI, Nord Bjaememan has been able to learn a lot about graphene and has been asked twice by the **National Graphene Association** to attend and help out at its annual conference.

“The most interesting activities that I have been a part of were being the National Graphene Association’s Graphene Innovation Summit in Nashville, Tennessee, in 2017 and the Global Graphene Expo in Austin, Texas, last fall,” he said. “The events brought together current and future graphene stakeholders to focus on commercial applications of graphene, drive innovation and promote and showcase graphene products and technologies.

“I met with a lot of interesting people, listened to many amazing presentations and learned almost a semester worth of knowledge about graphene and other 2D materials.”

These off-campus experiences led to Nord Bjaememan working for the **UM Office of Technology Commercialization** as a graduate engineering student analyst.

“I’m learning about technology transfer and intellectual property, which goes hand in hand with my long-term goal of being a strong team player with an expertise that reaches across engineering, research and development, finance and business, as well as being an entrepreneur,” Nord Bjaememan said.

“At the moment, my short-term goal is seeing every day as an opportunity to grow as an engineer, leader, producer and human being. I am also trying to find a challenging internship this upcoming summer and start working on a business idea that I can potentially launch.”

Nord Bjaememan graduated summa cum laude in May 2018 with a bachelor’s degree in **civil engineering** and a minor in business administration. He is pursuing a master’s degree in engineering science with an emphasis in structural and materials engineering.

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Campus Briefs

Students Learn ‘Real Politics’ in Washington, D.C., Winter Session

OXFORD, Miss. – Eleven University of Mississippi students spent their winter break learning about the people who work behind the scenes of the American government in Washington, D.C. Lead by Jonathan Klingler, assistant professor of political science, the students of Pol 391: Applied Politics met not with candidates, but with the people who make candidates’

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Young Alumna Gives Back to School of Accountancy

OXFORD, Miss. – Stephanie Jennings Teague, of Chicago, sees her commitment of \$100,000 to the Patterson School of Accountancy’s new building at the University of Mississippi as a means of saying “thank you.” “It is a way to show a small token of my appreciation to Ole Miss, the faculty and staff, and the accounting

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Reuters: Keep an Eye on the Money Supply

U.S. inflation roller coaster prompts fresh look at long-ignored money supply By Michael S. Derby NEW YORK – The amount of money sloshing around the U.S. economy shrank last year for the first time on record, a development that some economists believe bolsters the case for U.S. inflation pressures continuing to abate. The Federal Reserve’s

He also is taking some classes offered by the **Master of Business Administration** program that he will be using for his thesis.

"The focus will be on the translational science, engineering and commercialization of a graphene-enhanced technology," he said. "I will focus on a specific material, technology or application where graphene can add a benefit, and then work through the process from research all the way to a finished product on paper that will be ready to bring to market."

Nord Bjaememan's list of favorite professors is a long, but Ahmed Al-Ostaz, Brevard Family Chair and professor of civil engineering, is definitely among them.

"Dr. Al-Ostaz makes difficult subjects easy to understand and interesting, and helps me whenever I have difficulties understanding," Nord Bjaememan said. "I have also had the chance to work with him as a research assistant, so he's been playing a great role for my success here at Ole Miss."

Al-Ostaz, who is Nord Bjaememan's academic adviser, said he is outstanding in every way.

"I can unequivocally state that, in my estimation, he is one of the highest-quality individuals that I knew," he said. "During the past two years, I observed Torkel growing into a fast learner, independent thinker and well-trusted individual."

Nord Bjaememan almost missed his opportunity to attend UM. He first learned of the university after coming to the United States at age 17 to play ice hockey in a U.S. high school.

"I initially enrolled at another university, only to learn the school didn't have any scholarships for international students," Bjaememan said. "I had to leave the U.S., go back home to Sweden to work and figure out what to do."

During his first three years in America, Nord Bjaememan spent a lot of time with other student-athletes. It was through them he heard about Ole Miss.

"Since the school is nationally recognized for its sports merits and great student culture, I looked into it while back in Sweden and felt as it would be a great place for me to continue my studies," he said.

"Fortunately, after applying, Ole Miss granted me a scholarship, which made it possible for me to move back to the States the following school year."

Nord Bjaememan, who has always been fascinated by American university culture, loves the fact that he can combine academics and athletics at UM.

"I have been an athlete for all of my life, so after quitting playing ice hockey I wanted to find a school that had a true university feeling to it with a strong athletic program so that I could enjoy D1 athletics as a spectator while working towards my degree," Nord Bjaememan said. "Ole Miss had just that. After seeing that the School of Engineering offered an ABET-accredited civil engineering program with a small student-faculty ratio, I am sure that I made the right choice."

Nord Bjaememan said his Ole Miss experience has been "fantastic."

"I have had the privilege to interact with people from all over the States and even the world on a daily basis and experienced things that I never thought I would have the chance to experience," he said. "Because Oxford is a very inclusive community, it is the perfect town where people of all ages get together to share the love for Ole Miss."



Then-UM engineering Dean Alex Cheng (left) presents Torkel Nord Bjaememan with his bachelor's degree in civil engineering at the university's 2018 Commencement. Submitted photo

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