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### Fall 2018, Reflections of an International Alum

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*University of New Hampshire*

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## UNH Global

# Reflections of an International Alum

Kate Luksha

Wednesday, October 24, 2018

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Faraz Mehdi, originally from India, still recalls his first day on campus, arriving at the Amtrak train station on a rainy day in the fall of 2006 to begin his PhD in Mechanical Engineering.



Faraz and his wife and daughter at the ice castles

"I was dragging my luggage, map in hand, from the Amtrak train station to Babcock Hall, when a cop car stopped next to me and asked if I needed help, " he says. "Unfortunately, it happened almost outside my destination or I could have arrived in the most sensational way!" Even in the rain, UNH immediately made a strong and positive impression on him.

He remembers his first days through a jet-lagged lens and was especially impressed by the International Student Orientation Week. So much so, that he volunteered to be an Orientation leader every year until his graduation. He says, "I fondly remember, during those jet-lagged days, being immensely impressed by the efforts of OISS to ensure a

smooth transition for all of us. I found the orientation, in particular, very useful and I volunteered for it every single year I was at UNH, which led to countless amazing memories." Faraz understood the

value of a good first impression and bringing to international students the positive experience he received upon first arriving in a new and unfamiliar place. He took it upon himself to ensure others also had a smooth transition.

Not only did he work hard to earn his degree, he got involved in student activities and created lasting friendships. Faraz embodies exactly what every student should hope to get out of a college experience. He elaborates, "By the time I 'finally' graduated in 2012, I not only had some great education, but was cherishing several close friendships and had even met the wonderful woman who is now my wife."

After graduation, Faraz accepted a post-doctoral position at Texas Tech University in Lubbock, Texas. While it was a great experience for him, he continued to feel a pull back to New Hampshire. During his time in Texas, he found himself returning to New Hampshire frequently for short visits, including his wedding day, before he finally accepted a position at Hypertherm in 2015, and now resides in a small New Hampshire town.

"I am still working there in the field of plasma cutting, which I greatly enjoy," he says. "Interestingly, I did not have a plasma background, but my UNH education gave me the know-how and the confidence to make the jump."

Faraz and his wife, Madeeha, also welcomed a baby girl, Aiza, into the world in July of 2016. Faraz speaks of her affectionately as he jokes, "Aiza is now in her terrible two's, does not listen to us, and is the greatest joy of our lives. We intend to bring her sometime to UNH and know she will adore the place like her parents do."

For many international students, UNH becomes a home away from home. A place where community and personal connections are just as important as attending classes, getting good grades, and preparing for a future career. A place that creates fond memories, as well as building blocks for a future otherwise unimagined. Faraz never planned to go into plasma cutting, but his experience at UNH opened doors for him and prepared him to step into a successful career, one that is both challenging and rewarding. He believes UNH equipped him with the knowledge and confidence to walk down a different path, while also gifting him the opportunity to nurture relationships that keep him coming back again and again.

"UNH has given me immense love and affection, and I hope someday I am able to give back to it," he concludes. Perhaps his daughter is destined to become a Wildcat, as well.

**WRITTEN BY**

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