

An Astronomical Goal

UNH alum aims for the stars

Friday, June 2, 2017



SHAWN SWIST '17 IS HEADING TO STANFORD UNIVERSITY WHERE HE'LL PURSUE A MASTER'S DEGREE IN AEROSPACE ENGINEERING.

Lots of young girls and boys are fascinated by space — by rockets and spaceships and the idea of traveling to other galaxies. Shawn Swist '17 was that kid for most of his life. His goal since he was about 12 years old has been to one day work for NASA.

This fall, he'll take another step toward making that happen when he starts graduate school at Stanford University. Swist is getting his master's in aerospace engineering.

"I got interested in space when I went to the Kennedy Space

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Center when I was 12 or 13,” says Swist, who graduated from UNH summa cum laude with a degree in [mechanical engineering](#) on May 20. “As a lifelong space enthusiast, I want to one day be a part of the space program.”

He credits the math and physics classes he took in high school with providing a good foundation, saying, “It got me a nice little head start.”

At UNH, Swist was a member of [DIY Engineering](#) and [Students Without Borders](#).

During the summer of 2016, while working on the university’s underwater remotely operated vehicle, he took a scuba diving class so he could get a better perspective on what was happening beneath the water’s surface.

He also took an astronomy course where the professor confirmed the allure of space. “He was talking about the Hubble Telescope when it was first launched. He said one person had pointed at a blank spot and, seeing nothing there, said it was a waste of time. And now we’ve found galaxies that we didn’t know were there.”

Want to see where a degree in mechanical engineering can take you? [Learn more here.](#)

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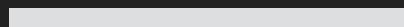
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