

**[Pablo]** So my name is Pablo Hernandez. I'm an MS&E masters student doing the technology and engineering management concentration. I'm from Mexico City. And I was working there for a few years before I came here. I have a big family, so we have, I have three siblings and my parents back at home, so yeah, definitely a big thank you to them because that's how I got to be here.

[Interviewer] Are your parents still in Mexico?

**[Pablo]** Yeah, my, almost my entire family. I have a brother living in the Bay Area. And yeah, also I've been married for a year now. Just newly wed when I started the program, I came here with my wife. And that's also been a great experience.

[Interviewer] What was it like growing up in Mexico for you and how has it, I mean, growing up there and then coming here?

**[Pablo]** Yeah. I mean, I have to be super thankful because my experience growing up in Mexico City, it was middle class. Like I never struggled with not having anything to eat or something like that. How it was very blessed to have parents who were willing to support me. But also definitely living in Mexico and growing up there, makes you conscious about how the world is, just the amount of difference that it varies in socioeconomic spectrum there. Growing up in a country that has a lot of challenges, but also definitely forges character really strongly. And I also was, like I said, very blessed to have people to support me in pursuing my dreams and making me believe that I could do a lot of things, even like coming to one of the best universities in the world. I think that's definitely something I have to thank them for. And yeah, also my school and my teachers were a big part of making me who I am and also something to be very thankful for. I think the approach—entrepreneurship is having a big moment in Mexico as well—and the approach of just knowing that there's this huge market outside of the US that you can also target is admittedly a big advantage, I think.

[Interviewer] Can you tell me a little bit about your background? Where did you grow up?

**[Pablo]** Yeah, for sure. I'm Mexican. I grew up in Mexico City. I did my undergrad there as a chemical engineer. And I did work there for five years before I put in here for the program.

[Interviewer] And then how did you become interested in engineering?

**[Pablo]** I think a big part of it definitely was my parents. They made me be very curious about how things work and you know, opening up my toys and see how they work. I also have two middle school teachers that I am really, really thankful for. It was my math teacher and my chemistry teacher. They both made it really more important to make the content fun than actually fulfilling the course requirements or something. So they did amazing labs, just like completely out of the curriculum, but that really got me to be engaged. And I think that was awesome for me because once you really love what you're doing, then you can learn a lot of things about yourself, but just making sure that students are passionate about STEM fields. I think that's really, really important and I was very blessed to have those teachers.

[Interviewer] That's great. So the next question is, can you tell us a bit about your area of concentration?

**[Pablo]** Yeah. So I'm doing technology and engineering management. I originally, before I came here to Stanford, I was working for tech companies in Latin America and it just made me realize how product

management was a super important part that guided the company as a whole. So I spent a year in a couple of startups and then four years at Uber and part of me coming here to get this specific concentration was for me to understand how product management works and have the necessary skills. Then I added a little bit of computer science, a little bit of data science, a little bit of design, for product design, so that I would be able to go back to the company and have a much bigger impact. One of the things I loved the most of my time at Stanford was joining the threshold venture fellows program. It's like a fellowship from STVP and it's for students who have an interest in entrepreneurship. And I just met amazing people there—amazing mentors, amazing friends. And really as an experience, it was one of the things that you just can't learn on your own, you know, you have to be here and in this community. So I think that was one of the most awesome things that I did. Also, you're taking classes from CS to mechanical engineering, sustainability. I wanted some things that are outside of our department, but really enrich your point of view of how entrepreneurship or even technology management happens is really cool.

[Interviewer] So the next question is, what are your career plans for after Stanford and how did you decide on them?

[Pablo] Yeah, I'm starting a company, leveraging a lot of what I learned at a technology company and then definitely from the skill set I got in Stanford. So it's still a lot in the making and there's a lot of things to be defined on how it's going to operate, but yeah, that's my plan. And I guess I caught the Stanford entrepreneurial bug.

[Interviewer] That's awesome. So are you, I guess just getting right to it after you graduate?

[Pablo] Yeah. I mean, I'm just doing a lot of exploration now—user interviews, nothing too formal. And afterwards I'll go full time into that, if everything works out right.

[Interviewer] Nice. What most excites you about your future?

[Pablo] I think being at Stanford is amazing. Because you get to think about a lot of things that you don't get to think when you're working. Right, you still have a chance to explore different subjects. But at the same time just being here, it feels a little bit like being in a football field and sitting on the bench, you know, you're just eager to jump into the action. So I think going back to creating and building things from scratch, that's something I'm very, very excited about, especially with the tools that I got here. Now I have this amazing tool set to go out and do a lot of things. So just like putting everything that I learned, maybe in theory, back into practice, I think that's, that can be really exciting.

[Interviewer] That's great. So, what advice do you have for future students and how can they make the best use of their time in MS&E and at Stanford?

[Pablo] I think the first one is this is a super flexible program. You can really do so many things outside of our department. So just to exploit that to the most. There's a lot of teachers who will allow you to audit classes and you can learn a lot from that and have like a very enriching experience. Going through the mechanical engineering classes, the d.school classes, which are an amazing experience, some business school classes, just try to learn from the most kind of things. Because just Stanford is such an amazing place to do that. The fact that we have in a small campus, such an interdisciplinary panel of classes, I think that's something that really, really, enriches the experience. Be, if you're interested in

entrepreneurship, make sure you check out the threshold venture fellows program. It's really a life-changing program and something you really enjoy.

And there's just so many events as well happening at Stanford. There's a website, [events.stanford.edu](https://events.stanford.edu). And there's so many things happening that, try to just check that once a week and see what's happening around campus and really look for some of those things. That definitely made my experience amazing.

[Interviewer] So you took advantage of [events.stanford.edu](https://events.stanford.edu) and went—did you go to stuff outside of engineering?

[Pablo] Oh yeah. I mean, things from international policy things at the medical school, you'll have amazing guests coming to Stanford from every single topic once a week. So just being, keeping your eyes open to catch those opportunities and going to see, for example, talks like Condoleezza Rice, Bill Gates was here. Yeah, when for example, the Qasem Soleimani incident happened this year, that very same week we had an event with a panel of experts. It's just amazing to learn from those people when that kind of things happen. So it's really, it's really interesting. Really fun.

[Interviewer] So what will you miss most about Stanford and the Bay Area?

[Pablo] Yeah, I mean by far number one is the people, right? It's the relationships that you build here, the friendships, the mentorship with, with teachers. So I mean, not everyone goes back to everywhere in the world. A lot of people stay here and that's my plan, so hopefully I'll get to see some people. But just having that kind of network and those kind of friends close by. And just having time to learn something new. I think that's something I really, really value and something I'm definitely going to miss about being a full time student. Also a big thank you to Stanford and the department because everyone's been amazing in this time. And I'll definitely cherish that.