

CLASS OF FALL 2022

*Outstanding Graduates*

**LUCAS S. RIVERA – College of Engineering, Master's**

*“My education gives me the experience and power to open doors and make a difference in both the local and international community.”*

Lucas S. Rivera will receive a master's degree in Civil Engineering with an emphasis in geotechnical engineering and water resources from NMSU this fall, after earning a Bachelor of Science in Engineering in 2020.

Growing up in Canjilon, New Mexico, Lucas saw how irrigation and rainfall affected his family's agricultural fields. While he loved his community of less than 250 citizens, he chose to attend NMSU because of the great scholarship opportunities available to students, and because it was as far away from home as he could afford.

As a child, Lucas often expressed an interest in building things, so his father – a State of New Mexico environmental scientist – recommended civil engineering. Luckily for him, he found his passion. Because of endowed scholarships, Lucas was able to step back from holding down a series of odd jobs and start looking at internships. He pursued volunteer opportunities to give back to Las Cruces as well as the international community, and focused on academics to eventually become the Outstanding Graduating Senior for the College of Engineering.

He credits Aggies Without Limits (AWL), an NMSU student group, for allowing him to apply his knowledge on local and international community service projects. Lucas even helped lead AWL teams that built a bridge in Puerto Rico, a water system in Guatemala, a pedestrian bridge in Honduras, and a water system for 25 families in Nicaragua, as well as reinforced a bridge and school roof in Nicaragua.

Following graduation, Lucas will serve two years in the Peace Corps doing water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) projects in rural Peru. After that, he will either pursue a Ph.D. in civil engineering or begin work in industry for either geotechnical engineering or water resources engineering.

Going forward, Lucas plans to strengthen communities by using his knowledge and skillset to build infrastructures that will be used for years to come. He hopes that anything he designs and builds will positively impact many people in their daily lives.