

CLASS OF 2023  
*Outstanding Graduate*



**ABDIEL O. LUGO MONTES**  
College of Engineering, Master's

Abdiel O. Lugo Montes' introduction to NMSU came in 2020 as an undergraduate at the Polytechnic University of Puerto Rico. The Manatí, Puerto Rico, native was participating in an online Research Experience for Undergraduates (REU) sponsored by the National Science Foundation (NSF), and NMSU's Dr. Pei Xu was his REU advisor. Abdiel's research compared energy use and greenhouse gas emissions between two different wastewater treatment technologies, and at the end of this internship he presented his research at a workshop hosted by Stanford University.

Abdiel continued working with Dr. Xu during his 2021 NSF-sponsored internship, and this research resulted in Abdiel becoming first author on two manuscripts published in the *Journal of Environmental Management*—even before he received his master's degree. Now, he will graduate with a master's in environmental

engineering with a minor in computer science.

Abdiel says working with Dr. Xu helped him understand the difficulty in making a lasting contribution to science. He became interested in environmental engineering because it is a combination of civil and chemical engineering, and he was drawn to specifically studying water resources after the devastation from Hurricane Maria left his family in Puerto Rico without water for two months.

Currently, Abdiel is vice president of the NMSU student chapter of the American Water Works Association. He was a teaching assistant for economics in the civil engineering department and did field work for the Brackish Groundwater National Desalination Research Facility in Alamogordo, New Mexico.

Abdiel will continue working with Dr. Xu at NMSU as he pursues a Ph.D. in civil engineering. After that, wherever he goes, Abdiel says helping his family will be his priority as he pursues water accessibility for all. ▲