EDMONDS COLLEGE
TESTIMONIAL

Elena Vlaskovic, from Serbia

Graduated from Edmonds College in Spring 2023
Completed her High School Diploma, then majored in Engineering
Transferred to Embry Riddle Aeronautical University for Aerospace Engineering

How did you learn about Edmonds? What made you decide to attend?

I've always known that I wanted to work in the space industry! Middle school was the turning point for me. I joined an astronomy society, looked through a telescope at the moon for the first time, and was instantly hooked. Since Serbia doesn't have a space industry, I knew I needed to go to the U.S. where the biggest opportunities were. A family friend recommended Edmonds College. Through the AYUSA agency, I found out I could finish my high school diploma and earn my associate degree at the exact same time!

What was your impression of the campus? Location? People?

It was a total whirlwind! This was my very first time traveling outside of Europe and my first time ever flying on an airplane and I was doing it all by myself to move to a whole new continent! I was definitely nervous, but when I arrived I felt welcomed. I landed around 11:00 PM, and even though everyone was sleepy, my homestay parents came right out to meet me in front of the office. The first thing my host mom said was, "Wow, she is so tall!" My host family immediately put me at ease by asking about Serbia, and my initial tour of campus felt so vibrant and community-oriented. Plus, as a STEM major, I completely fell in love with Hazel Miller Hall, the brand-new science building!

How did you like your academic experience? Teachers? Classes?

It was amazing! I had one year left of high school when I arrived, but Edmonds allowed me to complete it in just two quarters while taking subjects I actually enjoyed in English. I was blown away by how caring and involved the professors were. They always made time after class and during office hours to answer questions. Since my ultimate dream was aerospace engineering, I got involved with the campus Rocketry Club. That's where I met Dr. Will Hamp, a professor with a Ph.D. in Aerospace Engineering. He became my faculty advisor, mentored me through the university transfer application process, and helped keep me on track for my career goals.

Any favorite memories of Edmonds? How were you involved on campus? Did you have a job? Join a club? Receive a scholarship?

I jump-started my experience right away! About two months after arriving, I applied for an on-campus job with the Office of International Programs (OIP) because I loved being part of an international community. Outside of work, I was active in the Rocketry Club and the Society of Women Engineers. I was also awarded an SPEEA scholarship through the Edmonds College Foundation, which was a huge help! As for fun memories, OIP hosted so many great activities. My absolute favorite was going to a Seattle Mariners game. It was my very first baseball game ever and learning the rules as the game went on was such a blast!

What are your plans after graduation? Transfer? OPT?

I'm transferring to Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University in Daytona Beach, Florida, to complete my Bachelor's degree in Aerospace Engineering! Before heading to Florida, I'm doing the USCMS PURSUE internship for physics and engineering students, where I get to assist with particle physics research alongside research students from Princeton University. Edmonds really gave me the foundation and confidence to land opportunities like this.

What is your advice to students preparing to transfer?

My biggest piece of advice is don't be passive. Get involved and actively seek out opportunities! The best experiences, jobs, and scholarships won't just fall into your lap; you have to take the first step.

What would you tell other students about Edmonds College?

Edmonds College is an inclusive, welcoming, and accessible stepping stone for anyone. It truly provides the ideal ground for international students to succeed!