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CIVIL ENGINEERING ACADEMY PODCAST

Hosted By Isaac Oakeson

CEA 71 - BECOMING AN ENGINEER FROM HONDURAS TO THE US WITH MARTHA CASTELLON

Becoming a professional engineer is a difficult task at any point in time, regardless of where we were born or live in. However, challenges become even greater when we choose to pursue a career in a different country. Not only are the language and culture adoption barriers to overcome, the way things work out in the new place can also be intimidating. Today, our guest explains how she managed to overcome all of these.

Daughter of two engineers and sister of talented siblings ranging from engineers and doctors, Martha Castellon was born and raised in Honduras. Needless to say, she grew up surrounded by engineering conversations and, while still in high school, she realized she was good at math and physics. After receiving her bachelor's degree in Honduras, she could not find a job there and, following her parents' advice of "*Always continue your education*", she decided to learn English and come to the US to get a master's degree.

She ended up coming to Oklahoma because that was where her brother was living at the time, and she attended Oklahoma State University (OSU) and got her master's degree in 2013. Being an international student, however, required her to find a job within three months upon completing her graduate studies. Otherwise, she would have to leave.

After applying for several job positions, she didn't have much success at this point, and partially because, as an out-of-the-country professional, she didn't have many connections with people within the US engineering job market. That's when a book called *Getting from College to Career*, by Lindsey Pollak, helped her. She started following the principles laid out by the book when it comes to finding a job, and one of them was "You cannot stay home. You just need to move". This got her to start volunteering, what later led her to meet a person who found her a job.

As a “rookie” in the US engineering world, knowing little to nothing about the process of becoming a professional engineer in the new country, she later realized that she had to take the FE exam. Even though her social and informal language skills were on a good level, she lacked the technical jargon of the field in order to take an exam like the FE. This caused her to fail her first attempts.

Since different results require different actions, she decided to seek out help in order to pass the FE, and that’s when she found the Ultimate Civil FE Review Course. Martha explains in detail how the course helped her prepare for the exam and the features she liked the most that make the course stand out from others. She mentions the strong support students receive through a private Facebook group specifically for the FE Review Course students, and how the tons of practice problems gave her the material she needed to practice in a way that most closely resembled actual test.

Resources

Martha Castellon - martha_castellon@hotmail.com

Civil FE Review Course - [Website](#)

Getting from College to Career, by Lindsey Pollak - [Amazon](#)

CEA Episode 49 with Noah & Mostafa - [Youtube](#)

Oklahoma State University - [Website](#)

Autodesk - [Website](#)

[Civil Engineering Academy](#) - If you need exams, solved problems or courses, make sure to check out our home base

[CEA Community](#) – Haven’t joined up on our free community? What’s wrong with you? J/K. Ok, just go there and join a group of like-minded civil engineers!

[CEA Newsletter](#) - Join over 4000 engineers like you and learn the tips and tricks to passing the FE and PE. We even have a free resource for you!

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