Craig Palmer
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What is your favorite Madison/campus memory?
Football Saturdays and Halloween. Both, when added to the quality education, sums up the spirit and fun that can be found in the City of Madison and at the UW.

What has helped you achieve success in your career?
In addition to the holistic education I received at UW, my engineering degree taught me how to think through problems, and understand technology. All of these aspects have been critical to my success over the years. I think technical degrees arm people for many different positions in a world filled with billions of people and devices that are highly connected.

Outside of class, what experiences did you find most meaningful?
The amount of opportunities to have fun! There are friendly and hardworking people that make up Madison and the University, who also know how to have fun. The atmosphere of it all was amazing.

What excites you about the future of Engineering?
The scope of what engineering is in general. Specifically, electrical and computer, compared to the world I went to school in computers and tech were primarily connected to business. Today’s technology now touches every aspect of the world, all underpinned by the engineering done by engineers. It is changing the world with regards to energy, climate, etc. it’s almost hard to understand the entire scope of what engineering encompasses.

Besides engineering, do you have another passion you have pursued or would have liked to pursue given the time?
I added marketing and other business courses to compliment my technical studies. Personally, I am an avid golfer, my wife and I enjoy sailing around the world and going on adventures, wine collecting, skiing, and scuba diving.

Who was an influential peer/professor from your time at UW-Madison?
The Dean of the College of Engineering at the time. I received a poor grade on an exam I took in his class as a freshman, because of a simple math mistake. When I spoke with him about this one question in particular, hoping to receive a better score on the exam, he had no sympathy for my mistake and suggested that maybe I shouldn’t be an engineer. Still to this day, I now double and triple check my work. He sparked a fire in me, and made me a better engineer.

What are you most proud of in life? What is your greatest achievement?
Personally, my wife and I have been together for almost 20 years, and she will be my partner for life. Professionally, I am most proud of the different careers I have had in many different markets. I succeeded in computer industry with HP, the electron design automation industry with Kadence Design, the enterprise software market with Aspect Development, the consumer auction market with EWanted, the digital media tech market with Gracenote, and the internet media market with my current company Wikia.
What would be your advice to current students? What do you wish you had known?
Don’t be afraid to take positions outside of engineering. My career is a great example of the things one can do beyond engineering. Don’t be afraid to take risks in all aspects of your life.