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What is your favorite Madison/campus memory?
The fall colors in the city is one of my favorite that I remember. Also, those football weekends - the excitement, the red and white colors, the whole city came to life on those weekends.

What has helped you achieve success in your career?
I think a firm foundation in engineering has been an important factor. You have to be very disciplined in your approach to problem solving and that’s what Engineering gave me - a strong foundation and structure to my techniques. An engineer is all about problem solving; I try to apply the same principles to life and use them to answer questions on how to make things work.

Outside of class, what experiences did you find most meaningful?
I think one of the most meaningful experience outside class was an opportunity to talk and interact with so many other people in the University. People like Chancellor John Wiley, Dr. Floyd Rose and Naomi Walton-Winfield were always there as a constant source of encouragement. Things do get hard in grad school sometimes and you need someone to talk to and all of these people were always there to mentor me, give me guidance and support me in what I wanted to do.

What excites you about the future of Engineering?
The fact that the impact of engineering is seen in all levels of society and public policy is very exciting. There has been a change in trend in that engineers are not called geeks anymore. Given this huge impact, engineers, who are trained problem solvers, step up to be leaders now. It doesn’t stop there because we still need many more well trained and qualified engineers for this continuous growth of technology and the solutions it provides.

Besides engineering, do you have another passion you have pursued or would have liked to pursue given the time?
I’ve continued building companies and co-funding companies and they have been successful. It is interesting to see how different forces come together - capital, management, people; not just to build a technology or a solution to a problem, but also to create a society that encourages entrepreneurs. Technology has a create and destruct period to it and it is important now to see what can be done to create opportunities for people to work and sustain their families.
Who was an influential peer/professor from your time at UW-Madison?
Dr. Bahaa E. A. Saleh - my advisor. He guided me to be a good and disciplined engineer. Also Dr. Denice Denton, who I collaborated with during grad school.

What are you most proud of in life? What is your greatest achievement?
I immigrated to US with my parents 1970s and even though my parents had never had the chance of higher education, they did send me. The fact that an immigrant was nominated by President Obama to be a part of his cabinet is something I am extremely proud of. This is an amazing country with some amazing opportunities and I was able to benefit from it and take advantage of these opportunities that exist.

What would be your advice to current students? What do you wish you had known?
We have a limited life in terms of the positions we hold. So every leader will step back and someone else will take that position instead. It’s just like a shift register and you will get your turn too. The important thing is to be ready and prepared for it, when the opportunity does show up. Had I known this, I wouldn’t have been in such a rush. Enjoy the journey, that is important too. It is a great time to be an engineer and another piece of advice would be to get involved in public policy because we focus on solving problems. Be an expert, but focus on enjoying what you’re doing.