

# A degree for her family: Engineering grad turns sacrifice into success

By Erik Wirtanen, ASU News  
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**Editor's note:** This story is part of a series of profiles of notable [spring 2025 graduates](#).

From a young age, Angie Valencia has been driven by curiosity about how machines function at their core.

When she arrived at the [Ira A. Fulton Schools of Engineering](#) at Arizona State University, she chose her major as a way of following in the footsteps of her brother and sister — both electrical engineers — and pursued her degree as a tribute to her parents' courage and unwavering commitment.

"My degree will be the greatest testament to my parents' selfless sacrifices," says Valencia, who is graduating with a Bachelor of Science in Engineering (BSE) with an emphasis on electrical systems. "They risked everything to come to the United States from Mexico, driven by the dream of giving me and my siblings a future filled with opportunity."

The Mesa, Arizona, native finds joy in the challenge of solving problems and bringing ideas to life.

"Whether it's a simple circuit, a complicated integral or a capstone project, getting it to work makes all of the pain, suffering, sweat, tears and time worth it," Valencia says. "There is nothing more satisfying than being able to make or improve something."

[Samantha Brunhaver](#), an associate professor of engineering in [The Polytechnic School](#), part of the Fulton Schools, was an inspiring role model who played a profound role in Valencia's growth as a student.

"Through her unwavering support and commitment to fostering an inclusive learning environment, (Professor Brunhaver) has made engineering feel like a place where I truly belong," Valencia says. "She understands the unique challenges that women in engineering face — imposter syndrome, self-doubt and the weight of underrepresentation — and she helps me navigate them with confidence. Her presence reassures me that I am not alone, that my voice matters and that I absolutely deserve to be here."

The recipient of the New American University Provost's Scholarship says that when women pursue and succeed in engineering, they challenge outdated stereotypes and pave the way for future

generations to enter the field with confidence.

“The women who came before us paved the way for our success, and it is important we take each step proudly and continue the path for younger generations,” she says.

“Being a woman in engineering is not just about personal success — it’s about breaking barriers, inspiring change, and ensuring that the future of engineering reflects the talents and contributions of all people.”

After graduation, Valencia will begin her career as an electrical engineer at Northrop Grumman Corporation as a part of their avionics test team on the Chandler, Arizona, campus.

“This degree is not just mine — it belongs to (my parents), to their unwavering resilience, and to every first-generation Mexican American fighting tirelessly to leave their mark on this country,” Valencia says. “With this degree, my parents will finally be able to rest, knowing that their three first-generation electrical engineers have turned their sacrifices into something meaningful.”

## More about Angie Valencia

**Hobby:** Trying new food

**Performer:** Sabrina Carpenter

**Movie:** “10 Things I Hate About You”

**Game:** Minecraft

**Podcast:** “Crime Junkie”

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## Main image



Angie Valencia. Courtesy photo