

ASU grad dreams of helping hometown residents with a career in family medicine

By Elizabeth Schaible, ASU News
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Editor's note: This story is part of a series of profiles of notable [fall 2025 graduates](#).

When Eliu Zaragoza was in high school, he found himself especially drawn to his science and math courses. He appreciated that the STEM field wasn't arbitrary — there was a clear right and wrong answer, and he loved the challenge of finding the solution.

When it came time to choose a college, Zaragoza selected Arizona State University, eager to explore new opportunities beyond his hometown of Yuma, Arizona, and stay close to his family — including his brother, who also attended ASU.

Zaragoza will graduate in December 2025 with a bachelor's degree in biochemistry from the [School of Molecular Sciences](#).

"I've really enjoyed the chemistry and how it seems to explain why things happen the way they happen in the world around us," he said.

In addition to his studies, Zaragoza is a recipient of the ASU Alumni Association's [Medallion Scholarship Program](#) — a four-year program that recognizes students committed to service, leadership and scholarship. He credits the program with helping him find his first friends and sense of community at ASU.

"The opportunities (the program) has offered have been incredible. The networking has been great, and the speakers that come to our meetings have been wonderful," Zaragoza said. "It's reassuring to know that I have a built-in system at ASU that will back me up and support me."

After graduating, Zaragoza plans to apply to medical school while continuing his work as a tutor, caregiver and fellow at St. Vincent de Paul. His dream is to pursue a career in family medicine and eventually return to Yuma to serve his community directly.

“I like the idea of creating long relationships with my patients, and there’s a huge need for family medicine physicians here in the Valley and in Arizona,” he said.

“Growing up, I saw a lot of the health inequalities that my community and my family faced. There was a lot of miseducation, lack of access and lack of resources, especially in Yuma ... it opened my eyes to an area where I could really make an impact.”

Question: What was your “aha” moment when you realized you wanted to study the field you majored in?

Answer: I remember sitting in my ASU chemistry classes and enjoying the live demonstrations of the different subjects we were studying. I remember enjoying those so much and loving how concrete it all felt, along with the logic and reason behind them. So, I switched my major from biomedical sciences to biochemistry.

Q: What’s something you learned while at ASU — in the classroom or otherwise — that has impacted you?

A: Sometimes, there can be a temptation to cram or study just to get the grade you want, but then, you don’t learn the information well. I think one of my biggest takeaways from ASU is that learning is a skill, and it’s important to develop those tools and that ability to learn, rather than just coasting by to get the grade that you need. Even if you don’t end up using the specific material later, the skills and the abilities that you do gain will translate later on.

Q: What’s the best piece of advice you’d give to those still in school?

A: Say yes to as many things as possible. That’s how I’ve been able to figure out what I want to do and where I want to go in life. Gain as many opportunities as possible — internships, work experiences, volunteering or shadowing opportunities. I also think asking is huge. If someone says no, you end up in the same spot you were already in anyway. So, say yes to as many things as possible and ask as many people as possible for different things. Putting yourself out there is huge and has led to a lot of fun experiences for me.

This story originally appeared on [ASU News](#).

Main image



Eliu Zaragoza (middle) poses for a picture with friends at a Medallion Scholarship Program retreat. Photo courtesy Eliu Zaragoza

Text image(s)



Eliu Zaragoza