

Olympic gold medalist adds ASU graduate to his list of accomplishments

Léon Marchand returned to ASU to get his degree in computer science

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

When Léon Marchand returns to Arizona State University's Tempe campus for his Dec. 15 graduation ceremony, he has one stop he's determined to make.

"Postino's," Marchand said, referencing the Postino Annex restaurant, located on College Avenue. "That was our place as swimmers because it's right next to the pool (at the Mona Plummer Aquatic Center).

"I have really good memories about having those dual meets on Saturday and then going there with all the swimming parents and being all together. That was really special. So, I'll definitely go there."

If Marchand's name sounds familiar, well, it should. He won four gold medals — the 200-meter medley, the 200-meter backstroke, the 200-meter butterfly and the 400-meter medley — at the 2024 Summer Olympics. He became just the third male swimmer in Olympic history — Michael Phelps and Mark Spitz being the others — to win four individual gold medals at a single Games.

And he did it in his native country of France.

"It was a once-in-a-lifetime kind of thing, and I was aware of it at the time," Marchand said. "I remember being on the podium and being like, 'OK, this is going to happen only once. Please enjoy it.'

"I was lucky enough to have the Olympics in my home country. I don't think a lot of athletes get that chance. So, my eyes were wide open. I was listening to what was happening. I was feeling it. I

mean, those four medals were amazing, and the crowd was insane.”

As Marchand celebrated in the pool after winning his fourth gold medal, he displayed the “Forks Up” sign, making sure the world knew that he was a Sun Devil, having won 10 NCAA titles in three years at ASU and leading the Sun Devils to the 2024 NCAA title.

“I think it was a way of giving back,” he said. “ASU brought me so much in terms of swimming, but also in terms of what I was doing in school, the people I met and the experiences I had. The ‘Forks’ were something I was proud of showing to other people.”

Once the Olympics concluded, Marchand, 23, knew there was another challenge he needed to conquer — getting his degree from ASU. And he’ll do so in December, receiving a Bachelor of Science degree in computer science through ASU Online.

“I always needed a balance in my life,” Marchand said. “Swimming takes a lot of energy and a lot of time. But I also love to learn things. I didn’t want to just be a swimmer. I wanted to keep my mind active, still think about stuff, learn about things outside of the swimming pool.

“And you can’t really swim (at an elite level) when you’re more than 30 years old. So, I wanted to prepare my professional career as well. That’s why I came back to ASU.”

Marchand credited ASU Online for giving him the flexibility he needed to complete his degree. He said he travels every two to three weeks, making it nearly impossible to do in-person classes.

“I don’t think I would have been able to finish my degree if it wasn’t online,” he said. “So, I’m grateful for that. I just needed my laptop, which is kind of crazy. But it was super convenient, really simple and well structured.”

Marchand isn’t sure yet what he eventually wants to do with his degree. (He’s currently training for the 2028 Olympics in Los Angeles). He said he likes coding languages and cybersecurity, and that his capstone project on cryptocurrency was “really cool.”

Marchand also learned something about himself while doing his capstone. He’s accustomed to the solitary pursuit that’s swimming, but he thoroughly enjoyed working with other students on the project.

“The team spirit ... that’s something I wasn’t used to,” he said. “It felt really powerful to have four people on the same project and dividing all the parts. I thought it was really cool.”

Marchand is leaving ASU with a few lessons learned — don’t be afraid to take a different path, do your work a little at a time rather than waiting until the last minute — but what he’ll remember most, what he’ll treasure most, are the people from different cultures he met along the way.

“It was really awesome to see the whole world in the same class,” he said. “It’s not just Americans. I loved that about ASU.”

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

Main image



Swimmer Léon Marchand, who won four gold medals at the 2024 Summer Olympics and 10 NCAA championships in three years with ASU, returned to the university this fall to complete his degree in computer science. Photo by Samantha Chow/ASU

Text image(s)



ASU President Michael Crow and Léon Marchand, computer science graduate and Olympic swimmer, show their ASU pride before Undergraduate Commencement at Mountain America Stadium in Tempe on Dec. 15, 2025. Photo by Samantha Chow/Arizona State University