

How an online student turned a passion for problem-solving into a career in clean energy

By Meenah Rincon, ASU News
May 5, 2026

Editor's note: This story is part of a series of profiles of notable [spring 2026 graduates](#).

Not every engineer is born in a lab.

For Daniel Oswalt, a native of Hampshire, Tennessee, the spark that changed everything came out of nowhere, and the path it ignited was anything but predictable.

After high school, he spent time in the family construction business, bounced through a handful of majors, and even took advice from a movie character to study philosophy, a gamble that did not quite pan out.

Through it all, he kept searching for something that felt like home. He found it in electrical engineering.

While driving with Uber, Oswalt discovered that the company offered a scholarship through [Uber's partnership with ASU](#).

Qualifying drivers and couriers who have Uber Pro status, or an eligible family member, may be eligible to receive 100% tuition coverage through [ASU Online](#).

He enrolled in ASU's electrical engineering program through the Ira A. Fulton Schools of Engineering, one of only a few [ABET-accredited programs](#) available, and never looked back.

Through the global pandemic, buying a house, moving states, getting married and working full time, Oswalt faced every obstacle life could throw at him, yet he remained in good standing and took advantage of the opportunities ASU Online provided him.

It was during this time that he came to understand just how much teamwork goes into making things work, a lesson that rang just as true in his own home, where his wife stood by him every step of the way.

"I am not sure I would have been able to attend and finish this degree without the Uber scholarship," he said. "I am exceedingly grateful for the opportunity this partnership has provided me."

While at ASU, Oswalt joined the American Nuclear Society and participated in their mentorship program, connecting with professionals in the nuclear power industry who helped shape his vision for the future.

The course that cemented his direction was Keith Holbert's nuclear power engineering class, which opened his eyes to the discipline, teamwork and precision that serious engineering demands.

"I feel as though it is a meaningful way to bring about safe, clean and reliable power to our electric grid," he said. "This class inspired me to strive towards such a goal and to be more disciplined and professional in my work."

ASU's 2026 spring graduation will feature Oswalt proudly crossing the graduation stage with his bachelor's degree in electrical engineering in hand, closing one chapter and opening another. After years of detours, persistence and hard work, the moment he has been building toward is finally here.

We spoke to Oswalt about his time at ASU Online and his plans for the future.

Note: The following interview has been edited for length and clarity.

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

Answer: I was taking an automotive electrical repair course several years ago, and I just felt like I was enjoying it way more than the other people in the class, and I wanted to do more of this. Turns out one degree for doing more of that is in electrical engineering, so here I am.

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

A: The best thing for me was my highly supportive wife, but having a solid support system there to remind you that you are capable of completing this goal is invaluable. There will be days when you don't feel like you can, so having someone to support you and remind you that you don't actually want to quit is the best advice I can give.

Q: What are your plans after graduation?

A: I am planning to take the Fundamentals of Engineering exam in order to begin making progress towards licensure as a professional engineer. I have also been applying for a job in the electrical power industry as a gateway to the nuclear power industry, which is a long-term goal.

Q: If someone gave you \$40 million to solve one problem on our planet, what would you tackle?

A: Well, \$40 million might not be enough to build enough nuclear power plants to replace our other, less "clean" energy sources, but it could certainly help fund a lot of research into clean energy systems and efficiency programs.

This article was written by Sabrina Baker for ASU Online.

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

Text image(s)



Daniel Oswald, courtesy photo