

# Florida Poly graduate to help advance new space frontier with NASA internship



**Shooting for the stars has never intimidated James Mavo. The mechanical engineer graduated from Florida Polytechnic University in the fall of 2018, and when looking for a job, the sky had no limits. Literally.**

"I thought, why not try NASA? I always wanted to work with great minds," said Mavo, who is from West Palm Beach, Florida. "Working with pioneers in space exploration is very exciting. I want to be part of that new frontier." After a rigorous application process and more than a month of waiting, Mavo finally received the phone call. NASA was his next frontier.

"I was surprised, but not shocked. I was confident I had a chance," he said. Mavo began the 16-week, fully paid internship at NASA's Marshall Space Flight Center in January in Huntsville, Alabama. His main goal will be to create conceptual designs that would allow human missions go beyond the low Earth orbit.

"This opportunity is very exciting. We have not been past the low Earth orbit since 1972," said Mavo, referring to the last year of the Apollo program that took 24 astronauts in lunar flights. "These designs would allow people to basically live up there in space, beyond the ISS (International Space Station), since NASA has goals to take humans back to the moon and go to Mars," he added.

Mavo was part of Florida Poly's inaugural class and had a stellar journey during his time at the University. He completed two internships; one with the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) and the second one with fencing company Barrette in Plant City, Florida.

His dedication to research, working closely with Dr. Seyed Soltani, assistant professor of mechanical engineering, culminated with a paper published last year by the SAMPE (Society for the Advancement of Material and Process Engineering) Conference in Long Beach, California. Mavo also worked as a teacher assistant for several classes and took an active role in Florida Poly's Rotaract Club.

He said that all of these experiences, plus Florida Poly's unique STEM curriculum, have prepared him for the professional challenges the future may bring. "I'm convinced that with my degree, I'm ready to face anything that comes my way. I think the University gave me the tools necessary to accomplish this NASA internship and the other ones as well," Mavo said. "Florida Poly equips you very well for any job."

# Florida Poly welcomes Fulbright Belgium and Luxembourg official



**Florida Polytechnic University welcomed Erica Lutes, the executive director of the Commission for Educational Exchange between the United States, Belgium and Luxembourg - otherwise known as Fulbright Belgium and Luxembourg - to its Lakeland, Florida, campus on Jan. 16.**

Lutes toured the campus and met with University administration, faculty, and students. She was also presented with a medallion as a symbol of the global partnership that was established nearly a year ago to provide exchange opportunities between Florida Poly and the European nations.

Lutes, who has been with Fulbright Belgium and Luxembourg for seven years, said that one common misconception people have with the Fulbright program is that it's open to only a select few.

"It's open to all ages and all backgrounds, as long as you are a U.S. citizen," said Lutes. "There are no limits that we put on it. I think a lot of people hear the word Fulbright and they think it's some ivory tower and inaccessible. We really would like to see Floridians and people from Florida Poly applying to this program."

The partnership is one of a growing number Florida Poly has developed as it continues to create international academic exchanges. The most recent agreement was with Fulbright Australia, which will be formally signed at a ceremony in Canberra, Australia, in February 2019.

"We were delighted to welcome Erica to Florida Poly," said Dr. Randy K. Avent, president of Florida Poly. "Providing Fulbright opportunities to our students as well as hosting Fulbright scholars from around the world is one of our priorities. We look forward to a long and productive partnership with Fulbright Belgium and Luxembourg."

For more information on how to represent Florida Poly as a Fulbright scholar or to come to Florida Poly from one of its Fulbright partners, contact Mustapha Achoubane, associate director of International Studies.