

Harvard Failure Forum Report  
Kristine Monsada, Erick Serrano



**(ABOVE)** *EWB-UNLV members pose with the John Harvard statue*

In April of 2019, the Engineers Without Borders student chapter at UNLV (EWB-UNLV) sent a group of students to attend the Harvard Failure Forum. The Failure Forum is a conference hosted by Harvard University's EWB student chapter, which invites EWB chapters from across the country to collaborate on internal management and encourage "positive failure," an experience that, contrary to the word "failure," promotes growth and development. With the funding provided by the College of Engineering (\$2020), EWB-UNLV sent undergraduate students Erick Serrano and Kristine Monsada as well as graduate students George William Kajjumba, John Vargas, and Meena Ejjada to participate at the conference. The purpose of this trip was to return with ideas to strengthen EWB-UNLV internally and establish relationships with other student and professional organizations from across the nation.



**(ABOVE)** UNLV student Erick Serrano with CS50 instructor David Malan

For the duration of the trip, the traveling members met and worked directly with student and professional members of the EWB. The EWB-UNLV group participated with measurements of practical objects with impractical units, such as “arm lengths” to measure the flora around the Harvard campus. This was done with members of the Harvard and Northeastern student chapter to recognize possible scenarios in a typical implementation trip; both the professional and student chapter may have to resort to this type of measurement given a lack of proper equipment. Additionally, the members of EWB-UNLV attended breakout sessions with east-coast professionals regarding problems encountered in implementation trips as well as shortcomings when managing a large organization. The advice given by the professionals was crucial to strengthening the EWB-UNLV chapter; EWB-UNLV recently registered for a new project in Guatemala, set to begin in January 2020, and has begun growing rapidly in membership since the conference; thus, the information received by the professionals was practical for the progression of the EWB-UNLV student chapter.



**(ABOVE)** Scenery from Boston Commons

After the conference, the travel members were given the opportunity to explore Boston . Graduate students John Vargas and George William Kajjumba attended the non-official gathering with most of the student and professional chapters. There, John Vargas was offered a job opportunity with the Boston professional chapter. Additionally, Boston offered many learning opportunities for UNLV students Erick Serrano and Kristine Monsada, through the science hubs within the Harvard and MIT college campuses. Like UNLV, Harvard and MIT offered places to learn and seek opportunity. In MIT specifically, some students were researching ways to harvest radio waves into AC/DC current. Previously, Erick Serrano and Kristine Monsada had participated and earned first place in the 2018 Beasley Media Hackathon, where they also researched the harvesting of radio waves to sustainable energy. Being exposed to the new research at MIT was thus of particular importance to the two, and provided a new insight for further research development.