

Daniel's Story: International Student Experience

My name is Daniel Silva, and I was born and raised in São Paulo, Brazil. My wife and I have been married for over three years, and we have a four-month-old baby girl. Our journey to BYU-Idaho has been one of sacrifice and financial provident living.

Prior to coming to BYU-Idaho, we worked under a two-year contract at the Brazil Missionary Training Center. We met, dated and got married on the first year. While we were engaged, my wife's aunt wanted to give us a one-thousand dollar TV, but we asked her to deposit that amount into our account instead. That's how we began our savings. From then on, we made a goal to save a thousand more every month. We felt it was a realistic goal since we both worked full-time.

After I was admitted to BYU-Idaho we began selling everything we possessed, including our wedding presents. It was hard to see our stuff going away, and we didn't realize it until we sold our bed. Luckily, we still had a couch her parents had given us, and lots of blankets, so she would sleep on the couch and I on the floor cushioned by our blankets. However, that scenario didn't last long, and we knew it wouldn't because we soon sold our couch, and by this time we didn't have much more in the house anyhow. So, we both ended up sleeping on the floor, but we were confident it would all be worth it, and that we would learn a valuable lesson from it.

Reflecting on our experience, I feel that selling our wedding presents was the least of our problems. In the process of our preparation, I recall that my wife found a really good deal on airplane tickets, we felt strongly about purchasing them, but we didn't have our visas yet. What would be the chances of not getting them, right? So, we got them. Next, we went to our visa interview, but against all odds, the U.S. consul that analyzed our application turned us down

denying our first attempt. My wife became devastated, she cried inconsolably. I told her it was okay, and that we could try again, which required paying new fees, and going through all that process again, and I tried not to make it worse by reminding her that our plane tickets were due in 15 days. In the process of preparing for our second visa interview, we decided to change our sponsor, and I don't know how much of a determining factor that was, but the fact of the matter is that our visas were approved on the second attempt.

In addition to our financial preparation, I thought it would be wise to apply for a job on campus. I applied to work for the former Pathway International Advising. I was hired and started just a couple of weeks after we arrived in Rexburg. During my experience here on campus, I have been blessed with scholarships, so I work hard and strive to get involved volunteering in various programs to somehow pay it forward. Our pioneer journey here has taught us so much and helped us grow in many ways. It has been one of the greatest things that has happened to us. We have continually felt the Spirit as we seek to live principles of frugality, and take responsibility for our provident living.