

“ETH has provided me with an excellent education – and friends for life”



VSETH honoured Kaveh Razavi with a Golden Owl in 2022. The award is given in recognition of highly dedicated lecturers who provide their students with excellent teaching.

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Kaveh Razavi started his Master’s studies at ETH Zurich in 2009 thanks to an Excellence Scholarship. Today he works at ETH as a professor. In this interview, he talks about his time as a student, why he left his professorship in Amsterdam to return to Zurich, and the reasons he supports the scholarship programme today.

If you had any superpower, what would it be and why?

KAVEH RAZAVI – Time travel. I would go to the future to check out cutting-edge technologies.

Any particular book you’re reading right now?

My mother recently sent me my original Harry Potter series, so I am reading them in Farsi again, after more than 15 years!

In 2009, you were awarded an ETH Excellence Scholarship. What were your studies like back then?

My Master's studies were heavily practical. This was actually one of the reasons why I decided to join ETH. While I really enjoyed it, I have to admit it was very tough in the beginning because my Bachelor's studies at Sharif University of Technology in Iran were mainly theoretical.

Would you have studied at ETH even without the scholarship?

No, I wouldn't have been able to afford the cost of living in Zurich.

What is one of your favourite ETH experiences so far?

A difficult question! I have experienced a lot of positive moments at ETH, as a student and as a professor. Apart from making friends for life, one experience in particular sticks in my mind. When I was a student, Professor Timothy Roscoe's group was building a new operating system.

I was given the task of ensuring that multiple applications could communicate with the network at the same time. It was a great feeling to see it getting used by others.

And as a professor?

When I heard that we'd been awarded the Golden Owl by students in 2022. My group and I had been working around the clock to design a course that we all wished we could have as students. Of course, not everything worked out the way we wanted, and we were all exhausted by the end of the semester. The Owl washed all of that away!

After your doctoral studies, you were Assistant Professor at the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam. What brought you back to ETH?

My research brought me back, and the students! To solve security problems in hardware, I need to work with talented students who understand security and know how to build hardware. ETH is the place that trains students on these particular topics.

Today you support the Excellence Scholarship programme yourself. Why is that?

To enable the next aspiring students to enjoy the quality education that I received at ETH Zurich.

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