Ariel returned to Northern Virginia Community College (NOVA) as a student parent in the fall of 2014 after a five-year hiatus. After returning, he earned a spot on the Dean's List for four consecutive semesters and earned six scholarships that covered the entirety of his tuition at NOVA. Ariel also works at NOVA part-time. Most recently, he served as an advisor with The Pathways to Baccalaureate program.

Beyond school and work, Ariel is an advocate for postsecondary education, student parents, and first-generation Americans. He has shared his experiences as a working student parent on many platforms nationwide including former First Lady Michelle Obama's Beating the Odds Summit in July 2019.

Ariel is passionate about higher education and wants to continue advocating for students to make sure that access and postsecondary completion is attainable and feasible for all who wish to pursue it.

Ariel Ventura-Lazo is a first-generation American and the first in his family to attend college. He currently studies Business Management, and is entering his senior year at George Mason University in Fairfax, VA.

More than 1/5 of undergraduate students are parents and 30% of those parents are fathers, making up over one million students. Student parents are more likely to be people of color, they tend to be older, and have nearly twice the student loan debt than students who are not parents.