

LaMarke Patterson Interview:

How would you describe your area of study to your grandmother?

I study how people communicate. I look at who they are, what they say, who they say it to, and how that person reacts to what they say.

What is your primary motivation for persevering through graduate school?

To prove to myself that I can do it. I never thought that I would go to college, let alone graduate school. I am enjoying leaving my mark here at RU and am enjoying every opportunity that opens up to me.

Do you think there is any value in social networking with other graduate students in non-related fields?

Absolutely! Being able to hold relationships with people from various disciplines allows us the opportunity to apply what we learn from our area of study to different situations. Networking with other disciplines also gives us the opportunity to learn new techniques that other disciplines use that could be put into use in your own field.

What is your favorite stress-reduction technique?

Playing basketball. I've played basketball ever since I was 5, and went on to play while I was an undergrad at Lynchburg College. It's a great way to blow off some stress and get some exercise in as well.

What is the last book you read strictly for pleasure and how long ago was it?

I read Blink by Malcolm Gladwell while in South East Asia this summer. The book was great, and I believe it to be one of his best books yet.

Please describe your most meaningful academic relationship.

I have made a few meaningful relationships here at RU but I would have to say the most meaningful one would have to be Vice Provost Bill Kennan. I had the opportunity of going with him on the South East Asia trip this past summer and the privilege of sharing some great times learning and exploring communication in other cultures.

What surprised you the most about graduate school?

There were two things that gave me the biggest surprise in my transition to graduate school. The first one was how much I would use what I learned in outside of class. Getting together with my peers I found that we often continued to use the terms from class while having dinner or hanging out in the Bonnie.

The second surprise from Graduate school came from how closely the faculty worked with us. I think my biggest fear about coming to graduate school was that I was going to get all of this information and absolutely no guidance. I found that not to be the case even before the semester when we had a Meet and Greet with the faculty and I was able to sit down and actually talk to them.

If travel to Mars happens in your lifetime, would you want to be one of the scientists on board? If yes, what would you contribute to the mission?

Of course! Who wouldn't want to go to Mars? I'd be able to study the communication of the local Martians and hopefully bring back some interesting findings to Earth!

What is your favorite comfort food and why? How often do you consume it?

My favorite comfort food would have to be ice cream! I don't eat it that much but I have some every few weeks. For some reason I find myself eating it more and more as I get closer and closer to finals!

If you hadn't been admitted to graduate school, what do you think you would be doing right now?

I joined the army about three years ago. I am able to stay on a reserve status because I am in school. If I was not in graduate school I would be in Afghanistan where my unit deployed last year.

When do you expect to complete your degree?

This year! May 2011 I will commission as a 2nd Lieutenant in the U.S. Army and I will graduate with a Masters in Communication.