

Nara Cavalcanti Interview:

How would you describe your area of study to a novice?

In its simplest terms, internal communication is communication within an organization. It involves both "official" communication -- memos, guidelines, policies and procedures -- and the unofficial communication that goes on among and between the staff members of all organizations -- the exchange of ideas and opinions, the development of personal relationships, and the proverbial conversation around the water cooler. Internal Communication can give employees the information they need to do their jobs effectively and also allow them to take the pulse of the organization and understand its overall situation.

What is your primary motivation for persevering through graduate school?

I really want to answer questions I've come up with while working in this field and perhaps provide organizations with good research and information about internal communication and its benefits.

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

Definitely! Relationships make life better, it opens new horizons! Anyone can share knowledge with you! I believe the more people you know; the richer you will be with your cultural experience and ideas. It can benefit you personally and professionally.

What is your favorite stress-reduction technique?

When I'm really stressed I listen to good music and pray – that is my favorite technique. Back home, I used to do this at the beach while looking at the ocean. But in my free time I also like to hang out with friends, watch a movie and just have fun around the people I love.

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

Beautiful Day, by Elin Hilderbrand. I finished it last week. Strictly for pleasure, I like to read something that will make me think about anything but school and work.

Please describe your most meaningful academic relationship.

When I arrived here in US (last summer) and met some of the RU professors, I realized the teachers I had back home were not as open as American teachers. I really appreciate Dr. Brummette, who was my first contact at Radford. He provided me with all the information I needed about the program and the university, and opening the doors for this great life/academic experience. I have to mention Dr. Zoch, a great professor who, provides opportunities related to academic studies and also to the workforce. She is always available to talk and share her experience as a communicator. I am so thankful for all she taught me!

What surprised you the most about graduate school?

I can say every little thing was a surprise! Sometimes when you are foreign you just don't know what the next challenge is going to be, all you know is that it is going to be a big challenge! But if I have to pick one, I would say the professors. I was really impressed how open they are to help you!

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?

Oh no!! I'm very afraid of heights and I don't feel comfortable in very tight places – I can imagine how tight those rockets are. I would be happy to help the crew in the office – imagining this would be a very comfortable in Earth – with communication issues between the leader and his/her team members. I would make sure the crew had all the information needed for this adventure.

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

Coca-Cola! I just love a really cold Coke, it brings me happiness that I cannot even explain how or why! I try not to consume very often because it might not be very healthy, but at least once a month.

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

I would be back in my country, working with communication communicating. Probably working as a communication coordinator making sure employees are engaged and happy about their jobs.

When do you expect to complete your degree?

May 2014.