

Cheryl Johnson Interview:

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

While many people believe that criminal justice is strictly the police or probation officers, there is another side that many do not realize is there. This side involves theory and research that lead to the creation of policies within local and sometimes national organizations.

What is your primary motivation for persevering through graduate school?

I have to admit, graduate school is definitely a challenge. Sleep becomes something of a luxury, but it is definitely worth it. When I was 6, I promised to keep myself motivated no matter how challenging the coursework because it would make me a better and stronger academic. I enjoy learning and somewhere along the way in graduate school I decided the next journey I wanted to complete was to obtain my PhD. While many see graduate school as an endpoint in their academic career, I see it as a stepping stone to higher knowledge.

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

I definitely believe there is value in social networking with other graduate students. Even though they may not share the same academic field, there is value in learning and socializing with other students who understand the graduate school grind.

What is your favorite stress-reduction technique?

My favorite stress-reduction technique is curling up on my bed with my cat, Arbor, and watching Disney movies.

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

I just finished a book called *Feed* by Mira Grant. Reading non-fiction helps me unwind and decompress after a stressful day.

Please describe your most meaningful academic relationship.

My most meaningful academic relationship is with my high school science teacher, Dr. Glass. She encouraged me to stay involved in the science fair process from 7th grade until I graduated. In my junior year of high school, she enrolled us both of us in a graduate level course for interview and interrogation to help with my science fair project. She pushed me to understand statistics and to use SPSS and she ended up solidifying the research and academic path I am on currently.

What surprised you the most about graduate school?

The thing that surprised me most about graduate school was how well I would get to know the other members of my cohort. I was used to small class sizes from high school and college, but I never grew close to many people. Graduate school found me in my office with other students at 10:30 pm eating Cookout or Jimmy Johns while working through the latest homework assignment.

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?

I would definitely be on board a mission to Mars because space is fascinating and I love exploring new areas. I would be the scientist to conduct the background research and make sure everything necessary was onboard.

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

Saltines have become my favorite comfort food. Normally I eat them plain, but if I can get some peanut butter, that is a real treat.

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

I'm not sure what I would do if I had not been admitted to graduate school. I always wanted to continue my education so even without graduate school I would continue to self-teach while looking for a means to support myself.

When do you expect to complete your degree?

I will complete my degree in May of 2015.