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SH: What brought you to the Josef Korbel School of International Studies?

DH: I think the first thing that brought me to Korbel was Peace Corp. I finished Peace Corps and the Korbel School was a good school with a strong, vibrant [Peace Corps community](#) and I thought it was a place to get a good education but also where they would appreciate my Peace Corps experience. All-in-all it was a good option for me. And I loved the fact that it was in [Denver](#), which is a great place to live.

SH: Did you apply to other programs?

DH: Yes, the University of New Orleans, the Monterey Institute and Korbel. My first choice was Korbel. I felt it met all of my criteria.

SH: Where did you go to undergrad?

DH: I went to undergrad at the University of Memphis, in Tennessee. I graduated in 2000. I earned my BA in psychology at U of M.

SH: What classes and professors were influential to you during your time at the Korbel School?

DH: My goal was to study [International Administration](#) and then focus on [Asia](#). I hoped to work on regionally-based project management or in Washington, D.C. in Asia-related work. And that panned out, although I am working more with the Middle East now. But graduate school changes you. I went in to graduate school as more of a moderate but definitely came out more of a progressive. [Professor \(Martin\) Rhodes](#) taught a class on fiscal policy which really showed me how capital works within the global financial system, within governments and how to understand the challenges the government is up against in allocating money and cutting expenses.

[Professor \(Sam\) Zhou](#) is also one of the most influential people I met at Korbel. His vast knowledge of China is incredible – he’s lived through the history of China. One thing that sets Korbel apart is not only the excellence of the professors but that they are teaching from a real, practical viewpoint – they’ve *experienced* what they’re teaching.

SH: Tell us a bit about your Peace Corps experience.

DH: My Peace Corps experience was from 2004 – 2006. I was in China and the only kind of volunteers China will allow is education volunteers. I was teaching English at a university in Sichuan province and loved every minute of it. I speak Mandarin at a conversational level, which I gained from that experience, and then I also studied it later thanks to a scholarship which Professor Zhou helped me to get.

SH: There is a real bond between Returned Peace Corp Volunteers (RPCVs). How does that influence your view of the world and did it influence your decision to come to the Josef Korbel School?

DH: I definitely think it did. Having gone through that experience, which can be a struggle at times with the adaption required to a new culture and language, is very influential in forming ties between people. Since most Peace Corps volunteers have gone through that experience, they can definitely relate to it. It has shaped all of our worldviews as one who is interested and open to foreign cultures.

SH: When you graduated what did you think your career path would be?

DH: Well I think planning your post-graduate career is one of the most important things you can do. Start as early as you can. I graduated into the worst economic downturn anyone could graduate into, in November 2008. I had a lot of resumes out there, with a few nibbles, so I ended up taking a teaching job in Bahrain, which can be a good place to start when the job market is poor. Eventually I was contacted by [Chemonics International](#), where I work now. I think there were two things that really helped me get my job at Chemonics. The first is my degree from an excellent school with a good reputation in D.C. The second is that there is a [great network in D.C. of Korbel graduates](#) who all help one another. And now I'm working in international project management with the Middle East section of Chemonics, mainly in projects in Iraq and Egypt. And I'm as happy as I can be because this is what I wanted to do.

SH: Can you tell the readers a little more about Chemonics International?

DH: Sure. Chemonics International does work which is your textbook development work. They work in developing countries, in various projects ranging from fiscal management to pure development.

SH: Thank you Daniel.

DH: Thank you, I've enjoyed the interview.

--Shane Hensinger, MA candidate in International Security
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