



SUCCESS STORIES

Career Services is collecting student/alumni success stories to share with our campus community.

Date: November 8th, 2012

Name: Michael Sullivan

Major: Sociology @ UWS, Linguistics @ UMN

Graduation Date: May 2009 @ UWS, May 2014 expected for UMN

Would you be willing to share your story and picture on our website & social media?
Sure.

Success Story Details (position, company, school etc):

I am currently in my fourth year of a doctoral program in linguistics at the University of Minnesota. My study concerns the documentation and structural analysis of the Ojibwe language, my heritage language. Since coming to graduate school, I have had countless opportunities to visit with, record, and learn from numerous elderly speakers of Ojibwe in my quest to become fluent in the language and learn as much as possible about it. I co-authored a monolingual children's book, *Awesiiyensag: Dibaajimowinan jikinoo'amaageng* which won Minnesota Book of the Year honors from the Library of Congress, and did some translation work for the film *First Speakers* which won a regional Emmy Award. I have recorded thousands of words, sentences, stories, and songs for The Ojibwe People's Dictionary (online at www.ojibwemowin.com) and have traveled extensively throughout Ojibwe country identifying both the similarities and differences between the regional varieties of the language. I have accepted a position at the College of Saint Scholastica and will begin my appointment next fall as Assistant Professor of Ojibwe.

Interview Questions:

1. **How did you learn about your current opportunities?**

I was turned on to graduate school by the McNair's Scholars Program at UWS.

2. **What do you feel contributed to your success?**

My loving and supportive family is the catalyst. I also am forever indebted to the ladies of the McNair Program, my advisor at UWS Marshall Johnson, Professor Deb Augsburger, Ivy Vainio, along with many others too numerous to name.

3. **What are the difficulties working as both a student and a teaching/research assistant?**

My schedule is insane. I will be completing my required coursework this semester and will be preparing for the oral exams in the spring. I read at least 300-400 pages a day on average and attend lectures 3 days a week. Twice a week I meet with my two research advisors to discuss my interests and developments and one full day is dedicated to recording one of my main elderly Ojibwe consultants as part of my Research Assistant appointment. Wednesday nights I serve as a Teaching Assistant for a linguistics course in which I am the primary facilitator of the discussion portion of the class. I teach 2 community Ojibwe language classes in Minneapolis and volunteer at the *Waadookodaading* Ojibwe Language Immersion School on Fridays at my home community in LCO. Needless-to-say, I have grown accustomed to performing on a minimal amount of sleep. ☺

4. What advice would you give other students?

Work hard and pay attention. Make your mark. Strive to make your family and your people proud.

5. How did using Career Services help you obtain your current position (if at all)?

Is McNair part of Career Services? If so, then tremendously.

6. How has UW-Superior prepared you for the future?

It was through UWS that I not only gained the skills to survive in graduate school, but where I became aware of bigger issues and problems within not only the mainstream American society, but in our tribal community as well.

7. What have you learned about the job or school search process through attending and graduating from UW-Superior?

The McNair Scholars Program literally took me by the hand and walked me to graduate school, preparing me every step of the way. From GRE prep to school searches, UWS's McNair Program made going to graduate school a feasible reality.

8. What are your plans after you complete your PhD program?

I plan to start my new job, be at home every night with my family, and hopefully get some sleep. ☺

9. Any other information that you would like to share

I never in a million years would have thought it would be possible that I would ever go to graduate school, let alone have as much success as I have had. It was through UWS that I was prepared to take my education to the next level and succeed and thrive on a much higher level. I am living proof of the many opportunities and miracles provided by going to college and none of it would have been possible without my experience and preparation at UWS and through the McNair Scholars Program.