

Jonathan Motlagh, Alumnus of Piedmont Virginia Community College and The University of Virginia.

1. Name, College/University attended, year of graduation
 - a. Graduated Piedmont Virginia Community College in 2010 and transferred to University of Virginia's McIntire School of Commerce where I graduated in 2012
 2. Current city/town/state (if not VA) where living and/or working
 - a. Currently working in Alexandria Virginia
 3. Current occupation, job title, company/organization where employed
 - a. Director of Development and Portfolio Acquisitions for Continuum Realty. I perform buy-side real estate services for local developers and do everything from sourcing deals and negotiation with property owners to finding new developers to bring deals to as well as growing the business itself and managing IT functions internally. I wear a number of different hats within the organization.
 4. Any current volunteer activities and/or community involvement that you are proud of, if relevant
 - a. Lately I gave a presentation to a Marine reservist unit in Allentown PA about taking advantage of the benefits as a service member with regard to higher education. I meet personally with individuals from all branches and help them figure out which route to take when it comes to education whether it be pursuing a degree through a local community college or receiving a technical certification in a field of interest.
- How well did the education you received prepare you for seeking employment after graduation?
 - Some parts of my education prepared me well, others did not. English 101 at PVCC as well as business communications at UVA have helped me out the most. Public speaking is a strong second. Areas that could be improved upon are:
 - learning strong study habits
 - helping students figure how they best learn and giving them the tools to facilitate that learning
 - providing and incentivizing a study group program
 - helping student figure out why they want an education so they stay motivated and which means helping them figure out what career path they want to take
 - How relevant/important has your major field of study been to your post-graduate life/work?
 - Very relevant. Getting into real estate wouldn't have been possible without George Overstreet's Real Estate Track offered at McIntire. The principles learned as well as the networking opportunities have been instrumental in obtaining and maintaining job performance in the field.

- How relevant/important have other aspects of the college experience (such as, e.g., general education, research, internships, international experiences, relationships with faculty, social experiences) been to your post-graduate life/work?
 - General education is important because it helps you be a more complete individual and be able to interact with others outside your industry. Networking is a huge aspect to not just business, but life in general, and being able to intelligently interact with others will only help broaden that network.
 - How we perform research is always changing and keeping up with the most efficient ways of doing so is important. My Warrant officer while I served in the Marines told me, “I won’t have the answer to every question, but what makes me effective is knowing where to find the answer.” I spend at least 50% and more of my time researching while I work. It’s an underrated skill.
 - Volunteering wasn’t something I learned to appreciate until I got to PVCC. It gave me an opportunity to discover what I was truly passionate about. It was through participation in the Student Ambassadors, lead by Heather Lutz, and the Student Government Association, led by Steve Mc Nerney, that I discovered my passion for improving our educational institutions and the system as a whole. Being passionate about improving the world one lives in gives significance and perspective to one’s life. I’m definitely a better person for having participated and it’s also the reason I’m here today sharing my experience with you all.

- If you could tell your college one thing to improve that would help students achieve success in work and life, what would that be?
 - Align strategic goals of the university with those that support students emotionally.
 - Incentivize professors with career advancement opportunities that are student satisfaction centric rather than research and publishing focused.
 - Keep hiring professors that care about the students more than their research. That’s what made PVCC so special.
 - Keep seeking ways to be better and listen to what the students collectively have to say.
 - Spending more time with students choosing a career path, then selecting a program of study. Help them find something they are passionate about.
 - Create a study group atmosphere and fund it.
 - online registration
 - professor input and participation
 - designated study rooms that meet demand
 - too often study rooms were all booked up at PVCC while classrooms remained empty and locked. Same at UVA.