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CYSE 368

Interviewee: Craig Rollins
Position: Discover Your Dominion Mentor Supervisor
Date of Interview: 4/21/25

As I continue my internship, I've increasingly gained valuable insights not only through my work with my mentees, but also from learning from the professionals in the program. For this journal entry, I interviewed my mentor supervisor, Craig Rollins, who oversees all of the mentors and mentees of ODU's Discover Your Dominion program. I felt that interviewing him would provide a very insightful perspective, as Craig is not only my supervisor but also a fraternity brother as well, which I felt would help provide a comfortable and authentic dynamic for the conversation.

Craig shared that his journey into higher education and his specific field began with him getting his Master's degree from ODU in Higher Education Leadership. While pursuing his master's, he participated in two Graduate Assistantships (GAs), with his first being in the Student Engagement and Traditions (SET) office and the second in the Office of Intercultural Relations (OIR). These hands-on experiences gave him the skills and relationships that led to his current full-time role, which he secured through a recommendation from a staff member of ODU.

When I asked him about the most important skills needed in his field, He emphasized that good customer service and interpersonal skills will go a long way as in his position, you will be interacting with a plethora of different people and being able to handle everyone in a respectful and professional manner is a must. Time management was another one of the key soft skills required for success in his role as he constantly must meet deadlines he cannot miss and must be able to make those and fulfill his other requirements. He also noted that the ability to lead is needed to properly oversee both the mentors and mentees and adaptability, particularly because of the frequent changes in higher education policies at both the state and federal levels. In terms of technical skills, Craig heavily emphasized the need to have proficiency in Microsoft Excel for data collection and reporting purposes. He handles a lot of data and must be able to organize them correctly in order to submit reports that are required at both the state and federal levels.

For any aspiring professionals looking to work in a position like Craig's or Higher Education in general, He highlighted the value of starting in roles like an Academic Advisor or Success Coach. He explained that positions like these as entry-jobs help provide key hands-on experience with student needs and university systems, establishing the foundation for advancement in higher education.