

# CD News

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## For More Info...

- Visit <http://www.gpidea.org>
- Visit <http://www.ncrcrd.iastate.edu/distancedegree/index.htm>
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This is a program of the Great Plains IDEA.

## Student Spotlight: Brian Salmons, Iowa State University

A funny thing happened on his way to Iowa State University...That is one way to describe Brian Salmons' journey to the Community Development On-line Master's Program. "I was looking for a program that would help me gain entrance to the city planning and development field, but that was also convenient for my full-time work schedule. I had initially moved to Chicago from Florida, hoping to attend UIC's urban planning program. When my fiancé and I got to Chicago, I found [the Community Development program] and broke the news to her that our move to Chicago was in fact unnecessary. Amazingly she was not upset with me!" Brian and his fiancé have since moved back to Florida.

Brian hopes that the Community Development program will move his career forward in community planning and development. "The fact that the program focuses on community involvement in decision-making rather than top-down planning initiatives is a fit with my undergraduate education in an-

thropology."

Brian was accepted into the program in Spring 2006 and has enjoyed the coursework thus far, "I have been reading and learning about aspects of community that I would never have found interesting a few years ago." He cites an example regarding a journal article in the Community Development Society Journal that "focuses on the importance of considering child care as an economic engine of community development," which he finds "fascinating."

In his free time, Brian is an avid genealogist. "Knowing about my ancestors gives meaning to my life and guidance on how to live it. You could say it holds religious significance to me." He has a deep connection to Indiana, where he was born and his relatives have lived since



**Brian Salmons**

the 1800s. He also enjoys playing guitar and reading CD-related books and articles.

In terms of time management, Brian tries to get all of his school work done during the week, so that he can have free time on the weekends, "Anytime I can squeeze in some reading or writing, I do it." For more information about Brian, visit

<http://www.geocities.com/salmonforgey/CD/>

**"I have been reading and learning about aspects of community that I would never have found interesting a few years ago."**

## Recent FAQ's!

A number of you have asked similar questions lately, so we are posting them here for future reference.

1. What is the difference between a thesis and a creative component?

The thesis is research-based and necessary for those of you who will go on for a PhD.

A creative component can be an internship or practical experience that you report on.

Both of these will require you to work closely with your major professor and program committee.

2. Who should I choose for my committee?

Your major professor should be from the university where you are matriculating. Your committee members should be professors in the program that you have established a relationship with and share similar ideas with, in terms of your research.

3. What if I want to transfer in some credits?

Talk to someone at your university who knows the procedure for this. Your advisor should be the first stop for this conversation.

## Distance Education: Do's and Don'ts

Dr. Randall Hansen is a tenured, professor of marketing in the School of Business Administration at Stetson University in DeLand, Florida. He has written a list of extremely helpful "do's and don'ts" for distance learners. The following is an abbreviated version of the list. To read the entire list, visit: [http://www.quintcareers.com/distance\\_learning\\_dos-donts.html](http://www.quintcareers.com/distance_learning_dos-donts.html)

- **Do** familiarize yourself with the course syllabus and content before registering
- **Don't** think you can be anonymous in a distance-learning course; in fact, **do** expect more interaction with your professor and your classmates than in traditional university settings.
- **Do** be prepared to use and sharpen your communications skills, especially your writing skills.
- **Do** develop good online education habits, such as checking your email at least once a day -- more often if you are working on a group project.
- **Don't** be afraid to ask for help if you are having problems -- with the technology or with the course -- **don't** let these problems stop you from completing the course.
- **Do** plan on using or developing good time-management skills to enable you to balance course work with your other responsibilities and obligations.
- **Don't** take the courses lightly because they are *only* distance-learning courses. Distance education courses can be just as rigorous, if not more so, as traditional classroom courses. **Do** be prepared to commit the time -- anywhere from 4 to 15 hours a week per course.
- **Do** be willing to learn new technologies -- hardware and/or software -- that are sometimes necessary for distance learning.
- **Don't** expect to be a passive learner; you must be self-directed and self-motivated to succeed. **Do** assume your share of the responsibility for learning the course material.
- **Do** find a quiet and secluded area (of your house, apartment) to use as a place to study and complete your coursework so that you **don't** get interrupted or distracted.
- **Don't** procrastinate. Procrastination may be the one deadly sin of online learning. **Do** set goals and deadlines, and **do** try and stay current with your readings and class projects.
- **Do** find rewards and motivators for completing tasks and coursework. And **do** take breaks from being online too long; give your eyes a chance to rest.

## Publication Information

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