



Attendee at The PhD Project 2009 Annual Conference Accepted Into Program in Record Time!

Of all the 407 potential doctoral students who attended the recent PhD Project annual conference, corporate manager Carliss Charles moved the swiftest upon returning home.



The Monday after the November conference, she submitted an application to a doctoral program. Nine days later, Ms. Charles was accepted by Texas Tech University – where she starts in January.

Gaining entry to a doctoral program exactly two weeks after setting foot in Chicago for the PhD Project conference is believed to be a record. It is an especially impressive feat because Ms. Charles had not even contemplated applying so soon, when she arrived for the conference.

“This is an accelerated version of my dream coming true,” she says. “I thought I’d go to the conference for some networking and success tips. I got much more than that.”

What Ms. Charles got was a randomly chosen seat at dinner next to Dr. Efosa Idemudia, a PhD Project participant at Texas Tech. The two struck up a conversation, and Dr. Idemudia observed that his dinner companion possessed strong skills. He told her about a sudden, unexpected spring 2010 semester opening at his university’s doctoral program.

“I said, ‘spring as in January, two months from now?’” Ms. Charles recalls. “And he said, ‘you’ll have to file your application papers on Monday,’ and I said, ‘Monday as in two days from now?’”

Improbable as it seemed, Ms. Charles cleared her weekend plans and got the application in. Dr. Idemudia’s mild interest in the potential candidate turned to strong advocacy.

“Obtaining a PhD is tough because it trains students to work long hours per day, work and adapt under pressure and get jobs done,” he explains. “I was impressed with Ms. Charles’ work ethic; she was able to work long hours and under pressure from me by completing the application forms and sending them in within two days. She does not give up, and she is very committed to her plans—these are virtues that are critical to completing a PhD.”

Also noting Ms. Charles' high GMAT scores and her experience as a human resources manager at Procter & Gamble, Dr. Idemudia shepherded her application through a fast track. Within two days, Ms. Charles had a preliminary phone interview with one of the management doctoral program's decision makers. It went well.

Ms. Charles implored former professors and managers to write recommendation letters over Thanksgiving weekend, and the Tuesday following the holiday found her in Lubbock, Texas for a whirlwind two days of interviews on campus. It culminated in an offer on the spot.

PhD Project President Bernie Milano said: "Entering a business doctoral program is a major life decision that for good reasons, takes most people years to make and implement. But Carliss Charles heard the calling very clearly, and through Dr. Efosa Idemudia's perceptive and persistent intervention, it happened quickly for her. We wish her well in her new path and we know she has what it takes to succeed."

Ms. Charles is now preparing to leave her job and sell her home in Ohio. She already has rented an apartment in Lubbock and begun reading journal articles recommended by Texas Tech faculty she met.

It happened fast, but inevitably, Ms. Charles believes: "I loved my job at Procter & Gamble, but I have an innate curiosity that can't be quenched in a corporate job, and a passion for empowering others for greatness. Being a professor will be the ultimate in being a mentor and role model."

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