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Grant A. Bacon

CAREERS AND RESEARCH

Grant A. Bacon, BA, Research Associate, Center for Drug and Health Studies, University of Delaware

Grant Bacon graduated with degrees in history, education, and political science from the University of Delaware in 1998. He initially aspired to give back to the community, especially by helping young people as a teacher. Although he started out teaching, he found his calling by working more directly with at-risk youth as a court liaison and eventually program coordinator for a juvenile drug court/drug diversion program. It was during his time working with these drug court programs that Grant first came into

contact with the University of Delaware's Center for Drug and Health Studies (CDHS), which was beginning an evaluation of the drug court programs in New Castle County, Delaware. In 2001, he accepted an offer to become a research associate with CDHS, where he has continued to work on many different research projects. Two of his most recent projects include research that investigated the factors affecting the reentry experience for inmates returning to the community and another evaluating the parole program called "Decide Your Time."

Grant is happy to be working in the field on both qualitative and quantitative research. He loves working with people who share a vision of using research findings to help people in a number of ways, and to give back to the world in a meaningful manner. Every day is different. Some days, Grant and other associates are on the road visiting criminal justice or health related facilities or are trying to locate specific individual respondents or study participants. Other days, he may be gathering data, doing intensive interviewing, or administering surveys. He thinks the most rewarding part of his job is helping people who have been part of the criminal justice system and giving them a voice.

Grant's advice to students interested in research is the following:

If doing research interests you, ask your teachers how you can gain experience through internships or volunteering. Be sure to network with as many people from as many human services organizations as possible. Being familiar with systems like GIS (geographic information systems) and data analyses is becoming important as well. If you did not receive this training during your undergraduate studies, many community colleges offer introductory and advanced classes in GIS, Microsoft Excel, Access, and SPSS. Take them!