2014 graduate making an impact at EAA AirVenture

by Kayde Kempen - Tuesday, July 29, 2014

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For University of Wisconsin Oshkosh College of Business May 2014 graduate Marquise Jones--now the infrastructure technician and network administrator at the Experimental Aircraft Association (EAA)--graduation was long awaited.

Jones' educational journey started at a college in Alabama for one year before he came back home to Milwaukee and took a year off before attending UW Oshkosh in 2008.

"I had a rough first two years at UW Oshkosh because I didn't focus on my academics or get involved," Jones said. "I was placed on academic probation and had to leave for a semester. I knew when I came back I had to work hard to get my grades up."

Jones was part of the cohort group Byron Adams, Multicultural Retention Counselor and Adviser in the Division of Academic Support of Inclusive Excellence, shared information about services and programs offered for multicultural students at UW Oshkosh.

"Marquise's story is a good example of what a little determination and perseverance can gain you if you're a student struggling academically or socially," Adams said. "The college experience is meant to shape and prepare you for whatever life endeavors you might have."

The Division of Academic Support of Inclusive Excellence offers multi-faceted academic and culture programs and services including personal and academic counseling, mathematics and writing tutoring, academic intervention and academic progress monitoring.

"There are multiple tools we provide to students to assist them with issues they're having in college," Adams said. "Overall, we provide professional support services to improve the retention and graduation of multicultural students at UW Oshkosh."

For Jones, having the support of Adams was crucial to navigating the challenges he faced academically.

"Byron was a big brother, mentor and friend," Jones said. "He was the person always there to help and listen and he helped me keep on track with my grades and get involved on campus."

Through Adams, Jones connected with tutors and got involved in student organizations like the Black Student Union (BSU), Chinese Club and Multicultural Education Coalition.

"I think the key for any successful student is getting involved," Adams said. "Whether it's becoming more proactive and involved in your academic career or getting involved in activities like student clubs and organizations or becoming more dedicated to being a professional by doing internships and job shadows. Student involvement is one of the keys areas to student success."

Now working full time at the EAA, where he spent two years as an intern, Jones is responsible for setting-up and maintaining computers for 228 employees and set-up the WIFI for campers throughout the grounds.

"I always knew I wanted to do something with computers and started as a computer science major before switching to information systems," Jones said. "Interning with EAA for two years helped me know where he should go with my major at UW Oshkosh."

While preparing for graduation and searching for employment Jones was contacted by EAA to continue his internship for another year, but declined it because he said he was looking for full-time employment. After two months of no communication with EAA, Jones received a call telling him there was a full-time job available for him.

"My professionalism class taught me how to carry myself, act, dress and speak and prepared me for my job search," Jones said. "This gave me confidence to say what I wanted, and to know that if it didn't appeal to me, I shouldn't do it."

While earning his degree took longer than Jones he had planned, Jones said preserving through the challenges was worth every minute.

"Don't give up. It gets hard sometimes, but things can change as long as you are willing to change them," Jones said. "It may take a long time, but it's worth the time spent."

Learn more:

- Academic Support of Inclusive Excellence
- EAA AirVenture