

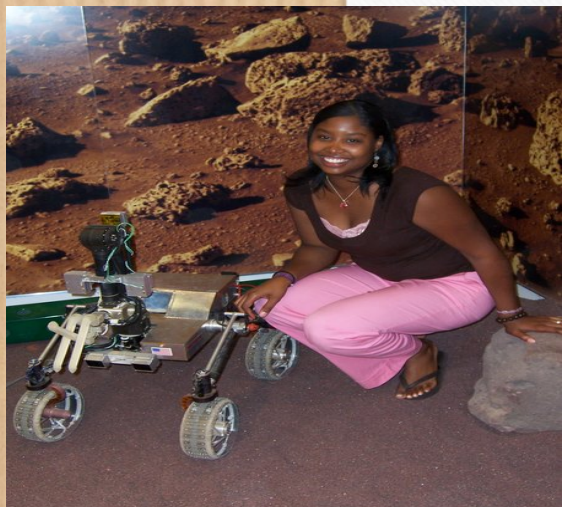
The Debt Free Graduate Degree:

Worth the Investment of Hard Work,
Networking and Resiliency

Institute for Broadening Participation Webinar

LaTasha Taylor Starr

June 17, 2015



Key Discussion Topics

- The Hard Work Factor
 - Undergraduate Experience
 - Interdisciplinary STEM
- The Power of Networking
 - The Intern Life
 - STEM Organizations/EPO
- The Resilient Investment
 - Graduate School (Master's Degree)
 - Made for Mentoring
- The Commitment to Continuous Learning (Doctoral Degree)



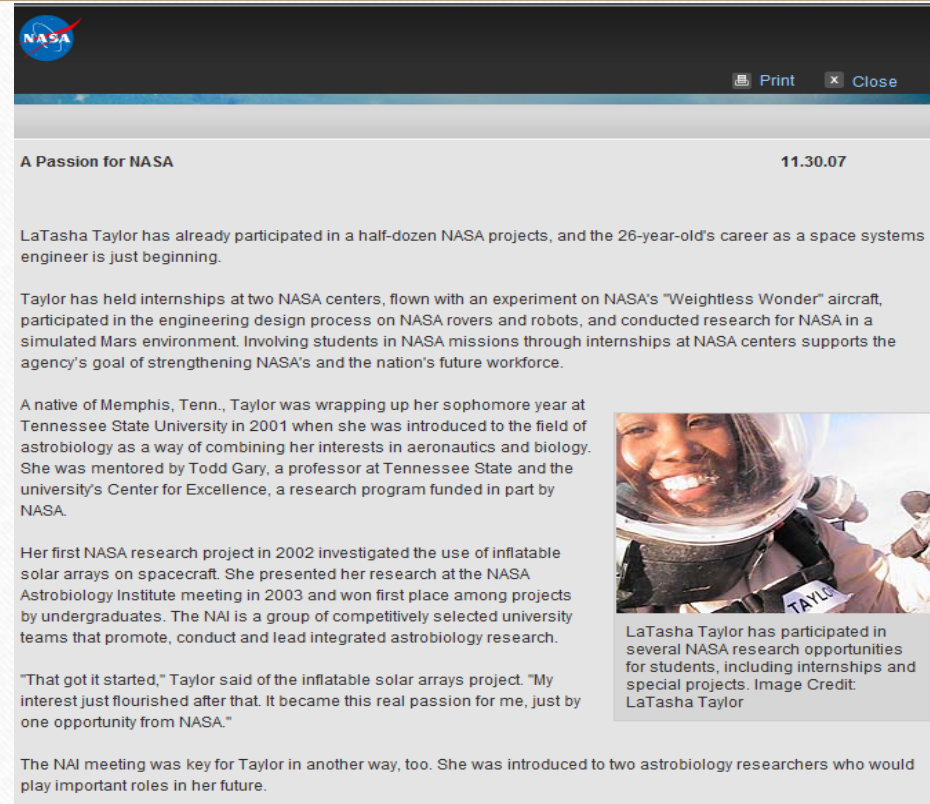
The Hard Work Factor

- Undergraduate Experience
 - Tennessee State University, TLSAMP
 - Aeronautics/Biology
 - Presidential Scholar, NASA CoE Funding and MARC Program Participant
- Interdisciplinary STEM Research
 - Vibration Isolation (KC-135)
 - Inflatable Solar Arrays
 - Conference Presentations
 - Publications



The Power of Networking

- The Intern Life
 - NASA Ames – Cockpit Design
 - NASA JPL – Rover Design
 - Centro de Astrobiología (SPAIN)
Biological Analysis of Rio Tinto River
- STEM Organizations
 - MsPhd's
 - NSBE
 - SWE
- Education and Public Outreach
 - STS – 129 Launch/SEMMA (Invited Speaker)



The screenshot shows a NASA website article. At the top left is the NASA logo. In the top right corner, there are 'Print' and 'Close' buttons. The article title is 'A Passion for NASA' and the date is '11.30.07'. The text describes LaTasha Taylor's career as a space systems engineer and her participation in various NASA projects, including internships at NASA centers and research on the 'Weightless Wonder' aircraft. It also mentions her work on inflatable solar arrays and her involvement in the NASA Astrobiology Institute meeting in 2003. A photo of LaTasha Taylor in a space helmet is included, with a caption stating she has participated in several NASA research opportunities for students. A quote from Taylor is also present, along with a note about her introduction to two astrobiology researchers.

A Passion for NASA 11.30.07

LaTasha Taylor has already participated in a half-dozen NASA projects, and the 26-year-old's career as a space systems engineer is just beginning.


Taylor has held internships at two NASA centers, flown with an experiment on NASA's "Weightless Wonder" aircraft, participated in the engineering design process on NASA rovers and robots, and conducted research for NASA in a simulated Mars environment. Involving students in NASA missions through internships at NASA centers supports the agency's goal of strengthening NASA's and the nation's future workforce.

A native of Memphis, Tenn., Taylor was wrapping up her sophomore year at Tennessee State University in 2001 when she was introduced to the field of astrobiology as a way of combining her interests in aeronautics and biology. She was mentored by Todd Gary, a professor at Tennessee State and the university's Center for Excellence, a research program funded in part by NASA.

Her first NASA research project in 2002 investigated the use of inflatable solar arrays on spacecraft. She presented her research at the NASA Astrobiology Institute meeting in 2003 and won first place among projects by undergraduates. The NAI is a group of competitively selected university teams that promote, conduct and lead integrated astrobiology research.

"That got it started," Taylor said of the inflatable solar arrays project. "My interest just flourished after that. It became this real passion for me, just by one opportunity from NASA."

The NAI meeting was key for Taylor in another way, too. She was introduced to two astrobiology researchers who would play important roles in her future.



LaTasha Taylor has participated in several NASA research opportunities for students, including internships and special projects. Image Credit: LaTasha Taylor

The Resilient Investment

- Graduate School (Master's)
 - University of Washington, Seattle
 - Human Centered Design Engineering
 - Astrobiology Coursework
 - GO-MAP/ARCS Funding
- Interdisciplinary STEM Research
 - Multimedia Programming/Tutorial Design
 - Spaceward Bound Field Training
 - Subsurface Life Detection/Biological Analysis
- Made for Mentoring – Mentor and Mentee



The Commitment to Continuous Learning

- Graduate School (PhD) – May 2018
 - University of Texas, Arlington
 - Industrial, Systems and Manufacturing Engineering
 - LSAMP BD Funding

