

Road to the BIS

“The Road Not Taken” by Robert Frost exemplifies our life’s journey and the choices or roads we take throughout that journey. “Two roads diverged in a yellow wood, and sorry I could not travel both” is Robert Frost’s way of telling us that we must make a choice when we encounter life’s forks in the road. Since we can’t take both roads the choice of which path we take when encountering these forks ultimately shapes us into who and where we are today.

My post high school educational journey started at Michigan State University (MSU). My GPA and family’s economic situation enabled me to apply and receive government aid in the form of a student loan and a one year partial scholarship. My curriculum in high school was geared to preparing me to attend college. I took the usual basic courses but the majority of my electives were “college prep” with an emphasis on math and science. I graduated in 1971 and applied to Michigan State University. I was accepted and became the first in my family to attend college. The choice to go to MSU was the first in the many forks of the educational road that I was to travel.

From the beginning, Michigan State was a challenge. I came from a small school (150 graduating students) and found myself immersed in a new small city. At the time I believe there were 40,000 students attending MSU with over 7,000 freshmen. One of the struggles I had was with the educational environment. My education up to this point had been structured. I went to one building, had classes all day long and teachers that I could understand. At MSU, I had classes at night, classes in large auditoriums (500 students), teachers that I had trouble learning from, and I even had a class in which the teacher was on television (taped lecture). I

enrolled in the General Education Program because I did not know what degree to work towards. I made it through the first year but was extremely disillusioned about college. From our directed readings I can see now that one of the things I lacked was a clear purpose. I wasn't sure why I went to college other than the fact that it was the next step in education and my high school teachers and counselors said I needed to go to be successful. Lacking a clear purpose might have been an underlying reason for my struggles and unhappiness at MSU.

The next path I took in my education was in healthcare. I had a friend that was attending a radiology school to become a radiologic technologist. He invited me to come to the hospital where he worked after his clinical time. I went and discovered a whole new world that I never knew existed. Radiology appealed to my math and science interests but I think more importantly it appealed to my blue collar roots. After my visit with my friend I applied to a hospital- based radiology school. It was a two year program that combined a didactic and clinical environment. Everyday for two years I received two hours of classroom education and six hours of clinical experience. The didactic portion of the radiology program consisted of classes in physics, anatomy and physiology, psychology, radiation protection, and patient positioning. The clinical portion allowed me to apply the theories I learned in class almost immediately. At the end of the two year radiology program you are required to take a National Board and score a seventy - five percent or better to become a registered radiology technologist. To maintain your registered status you must renew your license every year and provide documentation of continuing education when requested. Most radiology programs today are two year college programs that culminate in an "Associates Degree in Applied Science." The school I went to was a hospital- based program which teaches the same classes

and you take the same National Boards but doesn't include an "Associates Degree." Radiology is a hands - on and interactive profession which is suited to my type of personality. I am outgoing, personable, and I like physical activities. These are the same traits that are used to become a successful radiologic technologist. My education at MSU lacked purpose but my education in radiology was filled with purpose. Every day I could actually apply what I was learning to help people. Besides providing clear purposes the radiology program also taught me written and oral communication, critical thinking, nonverbal communication, and self confidence. I have been in the radiology profession for thirty four years and plan on remaining in the profession until I retire.

At one time many years ago I was considering a career change and returned to college. I enrolled in the Engineering program at Henry Ford Community College. It was an "Associates of Science Degree" program and I attended part time in the evenings. I transferred my credits from Michigan State University and started taking the required chemistry, physics, and advanced mathematic classes that I needed to obtain my degree. When I reached the point where I needed only one more class to obtain my "Associates of Science Degree" I applied and was accepted to Lawrence Institute of Technology. I never obtained my "Associates of Science Degree" or attended Lawrence Institute of Technology because I came to another fork in the road. Should I stay on my present course to obtain an electrical engineering degree or should I choose another path that led in a totally new direction. While vacationing in Traverse City I was offered a position at Munson Medical Center. The offer was totally unexpected and I had to take the position immediately. I took the position and figured I could finish my degree at the college in town. Unfortunately Northern Michigan College in Traverse City did not offer any

engineering degrees and at the time I couldn't afford on-line classes. I stopped going to school and focused on my family and job. The idea of obtaining my bachelors degree always stayed in the back of my mind. I felt that my college education was a quest that I started and something that I must complete. In order to pacify myself I obtained an advanced certification in radiology. While it was more education it did not contribute to achieving my bachelors degree. After my advanced certification in radiology I did not take any more college classes for quite some time.

I teach radiology to Ferris State students in the Allied Health program. I have been doing so for the past ten years. I enjoy teaching so much that I decided to go back to school and obtain a degree in education. I have been taking classes towards that end but as I chose that path I realized that elementary, junior, and senior high school education was not for me. I retraced my steps and I'm now at yet another fork in the road. A counselor at Ferris told me about the BIS program. I looked into it and found that the BIS program was an excellent way to obtain my bachelors degree and take classes I actually enjoy. The choice of paths that I have taken from my encounters of the forks in the road has led me to this point of my life and will lead me down the road to the BIS.