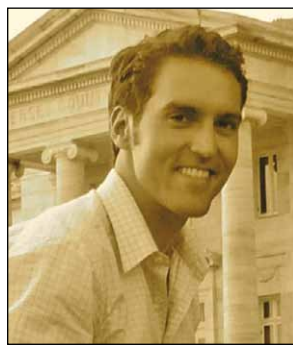


Spider in the Spotlight

An interview series with Richmond alumni sponsored by the University of Richmond Alumni Association. Students are encouraged to learn about the career paths of fellow Spiders and connect with the Richmond network as they get started on their own path.



Drew Setterberg, '06

Acquisitions Program Analyst
Department of Defense

Working in the Pentagon within the Office of the Secretary of Defense, Drew Setterberg, '06, helps the Department of Defense respond to Congressional oversight inquiries and advances legislation related to acquisition of weapons systems for the nation's armed services.

Looking back after less than five years out in the 'real world,' how did Richmond prepare you for what was to come?

I'm doing Congressional relations and government affairs, and some budgeting stuff. The only real politically focused class I took was maybe a political science course, Intro to American Government, in my freshman year. The ironies are pretty rich that I am deep in Congressional issues and policy, but politics wasn't even my focus. I think that's just a testament to the way Richmond prepared me for any opportunity with its focus on fine-tuned writing skills and critical thinking. In my working experience I have been given a good mix of collaborative projects and individual projects. I feel like Richmond always had a mix as well—preparing you to think about getting the job done. The mix of classroom styles of teaching—both group work and individual stuff—gives you a taste of what the real world is like.

What brought you to Richmond in the first place?

I wanted to go to a nationally recognized liberal arts university. My dad has worked in higher education and basically he kind of guided my search to schools that had excellent student/teacher ratios and excellent teachers, were known for their undergraduate education, their focus on undergraduate research opportunities, and known for small class size and great access to the faculty. Schools much like Richmond were on my radar, but Richmond was the best fit for me.

What advice would you give to current Richmond students about networking?

I would say study what you are passionate about and realize that your life and your friendships are your network. I think the idea of networking can be daunting to a lot of students because you think you have to put on this professional face. While it's important to be professional, it's also important to realize that your network is your friends. And your network is your parent's friends, your network is your friends' parents, and it includes everyone. Just remember everyone is willing to help and willing to have a conversation. I've never been turned down from having a constructive conversation, whether it's somebody I know personally or someone I was referred to three layers down. So I think you can get caught up and become paranoid about how to network. But if you conduct yourself in such a way that you're available to everyone, you'll find that the networking opportunities at the university, and in the working world in general, somehow makes everyone available to you.

Do you have a favorite memory of Richmond?

I have tons of memories—some probably more printable than others! There are things like Hurricane Isabel shutting down the school, making my group of friends bond together to figure out what to do while the school recuperates. I would say going on tour with my choir, *Schola Cantorum*, to France and Italy in 2004 was a highlight. But if there was one single memory, it would probably be part of the commencement festivities. It was the candlelight ceremony around the lake and my *a cappella* group—the *Octaves*—had the honor of singing a song on the bridge outside the commons during the ceremony. I felt a great moment of culmination when I was standing around my friends that I had sung with for four years, and we looked at each other with a sense of accomplishment, knowing that our friends and families were all listening, and our entire class was listening. And it's a really heavy realization that we finished--and we did it together. I always remember that as a great moment of success and accomplishment.

How do you stay connected to your college experience?

I'm so proud to see student run groups like the *Octaves* are still thriving. And in fact, the *Octaves* are celebrating their 20th anniversary this coming February. We're going to try to get all the founding members

back out, who are all over the country and are in their 30s and 40s, I believe. I still stay in touch with the group and I go to concerts when I can in Richmond. I still donate to the cause. I love the way that Richmond allows me, when I'm giving, to flag my gift for the causes that I'm passionate about. So a big advantage to me is that I can know that I'm giving to the parts of the school where I'm passionate, and those parts will see the money.

When you're not working is there something that you especially like doing?

Yeah. Absolutely. I really like to mix things up, to tell you the truth. There's a couple of different hobbies I've picked up since graduating. One of them is a group of buddies who go camping together every couple of months. And then I also bought a motorcycle and I like to take it on long rides to see the scenic highways of Virginia. For example, the Blue Ridge Parkway and Skyline Drive are beautiful. So that's fun. And also, I guess you could say I've gotten more into fitness and working out. That's become my hobby as well. I still try to sing once in awhile. But it seems like most recently—besides singing in church here and there when an extra baritone is needed in the choir—besides that, the only thing I sing is karaoke! [laughs]

Favorite song on your iPod?

So this is why I'm so weird—because as much as I sang in college and everybody knew me as a musical person, I really don't listen to that much music. I find it really affects my mood, which can be good and bad sometimes. But I also can't really multi-task. If I listen to music, I have to listen to the music. I can't read or write at the same time. So that inhibits my general music appreciation to focused times. But that can also be good. The song I play the most—I'd say my favorite song—is the song I play just before I go to the gym to get really pumped up. It's "Hysteria" by a band called Muse. Great if you want to drive really fast somewhere—but if you need to drive slow, don't listen to that song. It's going to get you pumped up. [laughs]

Who's the one person, dead or alive, that you'd like to meet?

I'm a pretty dedicated Christian and it would be easy for me to give a Sunday school answer for that—something like Jesus or one of the apostles, or another Bible character who had some big challenge of faith. Joshua would be a good one, because he shows God's calling, God's purpose, through the transfer of leadership from Moses. In the same vein, should I apply that to American politics, I think John Adams is the guy I would like to meet. The thing about John Adams is that I always felt bad for him as a president. When you look back at our history he was the only president who had to serve his term with the opposing party's nominee as his vice president. So the poor guy basically had a house divided, and had Thomas Jefferson undermining him his whole term. I think the fact that he so graciously abdicated the presidency when Jefferson was elected really solidified the government and stabilized our country. I really respect him for that. He just continued to prove what a high caliber individual he was. He wanted, for the sake of the rest of us, for the sake of posterity, to explain himself and to have Jefferson explain himself to each other. If you look at the correspondence back and forth, John Adams was much more faithful to that than Jefferson was.

How about a favorite place in the world?

That's a tough one. Well that's the thing—I've seen some cool stuff. But half the time it's like "Well, saw it once, check it off." You know. And other times it's like "Yeah, I could definitely live at that little lake cabin up in northwest Minnesota." Do you know what I mean? I'm just not really passionate about locations.

Did you have a favorite place on campus that meant a lot to you?

Yeah, it's kind of weird, but before the library was remodeled, there was a basement and a sub-basement. When I really had to do my hardcore combat studying I really dug in and kind of burrowed into a foxhole in one of those study cubbies down there. Especially for finals. I could really zone in and focus in a way I couldn't in other places. And the library was just such a great place because I had my little foxhole, my little study bunker in the basement. But I could also come up for a breath of fresh air. The first and second floors of the library were so social. You could always find a friend, and you could always talk to somebody and catch up and have a conversation. I think my favorite place was the library itself, but mostly just for the culture of the library.

Is there a favorite professor?

I had great relationships with my professors, so it's impossible to say only one. But there were three professors, I feel, that affected me. One is the director of the Schola Cantorum Choir. His name is Dr. Jeffery Riehl. I've been a singer my whole life and have been in honor choirs and select choirs in high school, but I feel like I really learned how to sing choral music for the first time under him. And that was meaningful. And then Dr. Rick Mayes, whose political science class I took as a freshman. It was the only really hardcore government focused politics/political science course I took, which is proving to be most helpful. Dr. Mayes lived in Thomas Hall, where I lived as a freshman. I feel like he taught me how to be a college student. Then there's one other professor, in the Latin American & Iberian Studies Department, named Dr. Dixon Abreu. I was a Spanish major and he taught me that I could speak Portuguese, too. One of my favorite classes was Portuguese for Spanish speakers. It's opened up a world of people I can talk to, that I never would have thought that I could have before. It was riveting. The two languages have about 60 percent cognates, and if you apply your rules from Spanish, you're almost there. From listening to it, you'd be confused. But if you anticipate the accent, it kind of starts to make sense. Which was really mind opening for me.

What does 'Spider Pride' mean to you?

Richmond's name has been growing in recognition—even before all the new construction, and all the investments, all the leadership changes, the school was improving. I've always been proud to share where I attended school. It has a way of giving me some professional recognition in terms of the caliber of my degree—so "Spider Pride" is that recognition. The school is on the move and constantly improving. In fact, I'm telling my sister—who's a senior in high school—to look very closely at Richmond. She's a big fan of Richmond—it's in her top three right now. Spider Pride is also being connected, whether it's going back for homecoming, or for alumni concerts for my *a cappella* group, or my choir. I'm also always available to Richmond students. Part of my pride is that, in terms of networking, I'm responsive to the extent that I can help.

What are your next steps?

Based on my schooling you wouldn't necessarily see me as a political career person forever. Richmond prepared me well for graduate school. I'm going to, I think, pursue a business degree to be able to apply that back to the principals of acquisition and government management and then take my government and acquisition experience into the private sector. That, I hope, will be an exciting chapter in my future career.

— Mike Field reports from Baltimore

Where are you headed? Visit the Office of Alumni and Career Services online at richmond.edu/oacs to get started on your path.