

Why I Am Doing A PhD

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Throughout my short-lived career as a software developer, I always felt like there was something missing. I worked at Rackspace, where I wrote code to automate network setup, and I felt that all my efforts were going only to improve Rackspace's bottom line. My life purpose, which is to improve society in some way, was not being fulfilled by my job, and I was only there to collect a paycheck. The saying goes that "When the average employee is put in charge, his first executive decision is to give himself the day off", and I definitely would have fallen into that category given the opportunity.

When I began exploring what I wanted to do to address this deficiency in my career, I began reading about scientific research that saves or extends lives. I noticed that the research I found the most interesting was research that was directly actionable and could help improve people's quality of life or even help them live longer. I began to feel a desire to participate in this research and realized that the best way for me to do so would be to use my background in computer science to go into bioinformatics research.

The other career change idea I had was to spend all my time learning, because I love the process of learning and education so much. I realized that, though being a professional student is not a paying job I could get, I could participate in the other side of education by teaching. With the two career ideas of research and teaching in mind, I decided to pursue a PhD in computer science with a focus in bioinformatics, with a long-term goal after graduation of becoming a tenure-track professor.

Since I want to become a professor, my goals while in the PhD program are to do groundbreaking bioinformatics research that saves lives and also gets me published, while also

getting TA experience, in order to both inspire the next generation and help me land a job as a professor after graduation.

In conclusion, I chose to pursue a PhD in order to do bioinformatics research and teach, become a professor, and help improve the world. I hope I am able to achieve these goals here at UTSA.