

Being a Ph.D. student has been a recent goal for me. As an undergraduate during my first couple of years, I never really gave graduate school much thought. This changed after I took Computer Graphics with Dr. Quarles. I really enjoyed taking Computer Graphics, and I was able to make a cool video game using OpenGL. After Dr. Quarles saw how much time and effort I put into the project, he knew that I would be right for his research lab.

Dr. Quarles talked to me about the graduate program and the different financial aid that Ph.D. students qualify for. My tuition and fees would be paid for, I would get a stipend every month, and I would have the opportunity to take my education to a higher level. During my undergraduate studies I was never challenged in any of the courses. Pursuing a Ph.D. would allow me to see how far my mind will go. Two semesters later I found myself working on an independent study with Dr. Quarles, and I knew from that point on that I wanted to join his research team and get my Ph.D.

The research process in my mind involves a great deal of steps. You need to stay up to date with all the major advancements in your field, what hasn't been done yet, what research topics will get you funding, and what interests you. After you have chosen an area to do research in, you need to do some preliminary work and write a few papers to try and get funded to do more work in that area. Once you get funded you need to get Ph.D. students and postdocs to help with the work and to run studies.

From the perspective of the Ph.D. student, all you need to do at the beginning is to find a professor at your university whose research interests you. Only once you see the kind of work being done by your professor and others can you begin to think about what kind of related field you will work on with your professor. By reading up on the different papers that other researchers have released, you can narrow down your selection based on what hasn't been done. Of course you need to keep your expectations within your abilities.

I find Dr. Quarles research inspiring. Using Virtual reality to make people's lives better is an excellent way to give back to the world. I would love to be a part of a team that one day develops a simulation that can save lives and train people in their occupation. Currently I'm working on a cardio simulation with Dr. Quarles. The goal is to train cardio surgeon residents to react correctly in different scenarios. Right now that project is ongoing, but we have already received good feedback from surgeons at UTHSC.

There are two professors whose research I find interesting here at UTSA. I have already talked about Dr. Quarles research, but I also find Dr. Liu's research to be intriguing. Though I know that Dr. Quarles, and Dr. Liu's research fields don't seem to have any common ground, I still find Dr. Liu's projects very fascinating. I am going to talk to both professors soon and decide which route I would like to go in once I take my QE.