

GRASP News

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Meet GRASP Alumnus Jacob Williams



JACOB WILLIAMS

Douglas Freeman High School
Class of 2011

NC State University
B.S. in Industrial and Systems
Engineering, 2016

What did you study in college? I earned a Bachelor of Science in Industrial and Systems Engineering and a Minor in Economics. I also completed an internship at Schneider Electric and a co-op at Cisco Systems.

What is the best thing GRASP has done for you? GRASP took my college aspirations, financial shortcomings, and financial aid/scholarship/grant opportunities and aligned them in a way that made sense for my future.

What are you doing now? I'm a Networking Sales Engineer at Citrix Systems Inc. I work with enterprise customers on enabling their future success in a digitized world leveraging Citrix Solutions. We enable our customers to work securely from anywhere, on any device, at any time.

What one piece of "educational advice" would you give to high school students? Educate yourself on financial literacy. Understand how subsidized and unsubsidized loans work. Understand how long it will take you to pay off a loan. Realize that attending a university could be the biggest financial investment you ever make in yourself. Understand that a 4-year university out of high school is not the best route for everyone. We all have our own path and timeline towards success; don't follow the herd, pave your own path.

What is the biggest life challenge you faced relative to your educational path? At NC State I was facing family and financial struggles, while still finding a way to excel in my coursework. I was surrounded by many students who had parents that were engineers and did not have financial

hardships. My parents worked blue collar jobs, and I held a job ever since I was 16. Persistence, a positive attitude, and grit got me through. One step at a time, always be moving forward.



Expanding students' opportunities to learn

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GRASP is a Virginia 501(c)(3) nonprofit. GRASP seeks to give ALL students in Virginia the opportunity to build fulfilling lives through post-secondary educational pathways.

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