August 21, 2021

Yesterday we had our orientation for the Master’s in Software Development program at the University of Utah.

The Master’s in Software Development at the University of Utah is 16 month program developed for those interested in software development that do not have previous education or experience in software development.

They had box breakfast because that’s how they do in person meals with the delta variant on the loose. It was hard to find a seat because I was my standard 10 minutes late. At the table with one remaining seat were students doing various degrees: a PhD in data visualization, a Masters in Computer Science, and the four of remaining students were in the Master’s in Software Development with me.

The students doing the PhD and computer science masters had prior computer degrees, but the masters software development program came from many backgrounds. So far the degrees from students I talked to are: electrical engineering, finance, operations (business), history, spanish, film, teaching (secondary), finance(business), and art. Most of the students were at least approachable, and some were genuinely nice people.

At orientation, a career coach from the department gave us some general guidance. She basically said to network and go to everything they sponsor – career fairs, meetups, alumni meet and greets, etc. Then, a few of the professors spoke about the program and got some of us a bit anxious.

Then there was a student panel with the existing class. The panel had several different perspectives: a more chilled out student that studied 1-3 hours per day, two students that studied about 8 hours per day, and young mother that took care of her toddler after class and didn’t study until about 8 pm at night, when she would study until 2 or 3 in the morning. Those two students that studied that 8 hours daily reminded me of several of the students in my 1L law school class (the really important first year of law school), and with that memory, the ensuing sweaty palms and feelings of extreme desperation. I held it in though and went up to chat with the relaxed dude after class.

This laid back guy was at once comforting. He said he thought maybe some people socialized and got on facebook during some of those 8 hours. He said that he had barely gotten into the program – had to go through 2 cycles on the wait list and had had a 2.8 gpa from college.

He also said clarified something that I loved to hear. I said that one of the panelist that studied those 8 hours had a 4.0, what if I don’t care about getting a 4.0? He said, “well I ended up with a 3.875 because I forgot about studying for the final exam and basically failed it. Everytime I thought I would fail something, my grade got curved up tremendously and I got all A’s except for the D that became a B. That B was my only B.

That conversation made my day. It was a little hope that would at least shackle my anxiety until class begins on Monday.