

Interview Assessment #3

Name: Dr. Lorin Swint Matthews

Profession: Astrophysics

Location: Baylor University---Waco, TX

Date: October 3, 2016

Dr. Matthews is currently an associate professor at Baylor University. Apart from working at Baylor University. Apart from working at Baylor, she spent a considerable time working as an engineer at Raytheon Aircraft Integrations Systems. While she was at Raytheon, she was working on a project for NASA's Stratospheric Observatory Infrared Astronomy (SOFIA). However, Dr. Matthews did come back to become a professor at Baylor. She is now doing her research on dusty plasmas and also the early stages of planet formation.

We began talking about how she got interested in this field. She told me that she actually didn't start off as a physics major. Instead, her professors identified her talent in physics while she was majoring in a different field. After this, Dr. Matthews decided to pursue a career in this field. I thought this was something very interesting. After this, we discussed about the time it takes to obtain all the required education. I have always heard people tell me that to obtain a PhD, you have to be in school for a very long time but that wasn't what happened to Dr. Matthews. She completed her PhD in just four years! I was extremely shocked by that and wondered how she managed to do that. When I asked her how she did that she told me that her circumstances allowed her to finish it quickly but that won't be the case for everyone. She also told me that it

is ok if you take a long time to do your PhD because there will be many factors that will affect the length of your research. I felt that this is something very important to keep in mind during college because I know that I am going to face many obstacles and it is important to not give up. The final thing that we discussed about is the financial aspect for college in this particular field. What she told me was very surprising. Apparently, if you are going to go into science research, your graduate studies will be paid for. Of course, you have to have done well in undergrad and on the GREs. If I get my graduate tuition all paid then I will be walking out of college with a relatively small amount of student debt. This made me feel more confident about choosing this career.

I found this research interview to be incredibly helpful. I really got to a lot of information especially about the educational requirements for this field. By learning all these information, I feel more confident and prepared for my journey in astronomy.