

Interview Assessment #8

Name of Professional: Dr. Jason Cooley

Profession: Chief of Innovations for the Frisco City Manager's Office

Date of Interview: 2/9/2022

Assessment:

This week I had the opportunity to meet with Dr. Jason Cooley. I had gotten in contact with Mr. Cooley through one of my mentors from last year Mrs. Tracy Gamble. They have both worked together on local projects for the city of Frisco and had become close friends, so when I had asked Mrs. Gamble for some help finding connections in the city managers or the city planners office he was the first that came to mind. Dr. Cooley was also mentioned to me by Chris Lee, who was my other mentor last year. They two of them also know each other through different city projects and organizations like the Frisco Economic Development Corporation, which works very closely with the Frisco Chamber of Commerce. Dr. Cooley currently serves as the Chief of Innovations Officer for Frisco's City Manager's Office. He is a graduate of the University of Southern Mississippi where he graduated with his bachelors in speech communications and rhetoric, and then earned his masters of arts in political science and government and then he moved to the University of Texas at Dallas where he earned his doctorate in philosophy. He is also a professor at the University of North Texas at the Hall Park campus. Dr. Cooley and I had talked briefly about what I would like to do in ISM this year and what his position does and what I would be able to observe and learn from it, but this was our first face to face meeting and we discussed all those things in a lot more depth and we also discussed upcoming projects and events within the city of Frisco as well as potential ideas for my final product that I could do.

First off we discussed what my goals for ISM this year were and the things I was interested in and wanted to research. We then talked about how Dr. Cooley's position touches on or interacts with all of my interests. For example he researches policies and laws to see what things can be updated or reworked within Frisco to do things that other cities haven't done or develop policies that haven't been written yet. In regards to media interaction and development he works with different groups of the city staff to put together press releases and citizen documents that explain upcoming projects and innovations. He then went into detail about some of the projects she is currently working on, including implementing 5G towers around frisco, driverless cars, drone delivery, and the new Frisco public library. Next I had the chance to show Dr. Cooley my original work project and to get his thoughts on it. Overall he was impressed with the model I created and the advertisements I created for the city. He did give me a lot of helpful pointers and pieces of feedback on how I could improve the model so that it's more effective and functional as a city. One example is that I could create spread out substations for police, fire, and medical services because the way I created the zoning for the original city things were more placed in chunks rather than wide spread. I would like to go in on my own time and revise the model I created. I will hopefully be able to have it fixed before

research showcase night. Next we discussed potential ideas for what I could do for my final product this semester. I had talked to him about the first idea I had which was creating/ designing a temporary water filtration system or cleansing device that could be used to assist small residential areas experiencing water insecurity and pollution. It turns out that this is actually a thing that is happening within Frisco right now. There are a series of brooks and channels within Frisco where the water quality is less than favorable, so a small group of city of Frisco employees decided to try out some ideas to help clean the water and they ended up developing a new very effective method using supplies they got from a home depot. They are now working with dr. Cooley's team applied for a patent for the method and marketed it. I planned on using this project idea for my college classes final project, so Dr. Cooley actually offered to get me in contact with the people who created the method so I could pick their brains and see how they came up with the idea and process. We also talked about a potential idea that I had thought about last year, but it was to redraw the Texas congressional map the correct way. This would mean focusing solely on demographics and population breakdowns rather than party affiliations and gerrymandering. This would be in an effort to show that it is possible to do and that everyone can be equally represented in the States legislature. I actually really love this idea but I had no idea where I would've started. Dr. Cooley said that he has access to resources and data that would make this process super easy and has friends in Austin who have worked on drawing the redistricting maps which he could put me in contact with.

Lastly I asked Dr. Cooley to be my mentor and he said he would be happy to be my mentor and help me with anything I would need. I'm super excited to begin working with Dr. Cooley and I think it will be an awesome semester of experiences!