



Jessica Prater - both an alumna from our I/O Psychology masters program and an adjunct professor at MTSU - shares her journey to pursuing a graduate degree and her career path ever since. Our **MTSU Alumni Association** has helped her stay connected along the way ♦

#mtsucgs #alumnispotlight #industrialorganizational #psychology

When did you graduate from MTSU? I got my Master's Degree in 2010

Where are you living now? Just south of Murfreesboro in Bell Buckle, TN

What program(s) did you graduate from? Psychology with an Emphasis in Industrial/Organizational Psychology

How did you choose to pursue a graduate degree? I was nearing the end of my undergraduate program and saw what was happening in the economy (2017/18). While the plan had always been to get a few years in the workplace and return for my graduate degree, I decided to pursue my graduate degree while the economy was struggling. It ended up being a great choice for me personally and for my career trajectory.

What was your favorite memory of attending MTSU? The football games. I met my husband at an MTSU game my first semester of graduate school (he is an alumni of the School of Agriculture)

Describe your career path for us: I had a fantastic internship during my second year of graduate school with Bridgestone Americas in Nashville. This turned into a full time job after graduation. I held roles in the Human Resources department and the Training Function of the Manufacturing Organization. I spent 7 years with the organization and my last role was Manager of Technical Training and Performance service all our North American manufacturing locations through our

Manufacturing Education Center. In 2016 I had my son, and decided to pursue self-employment. I now own J Prater Consulting, a consulting agency specializing in Talent Development and Training.

What advice would you give to a prospective student thinking about graduate school? The most important thing is to think about how graduate school will help advance your career. For me, I chose a program based on the outcomes I wanted for my career. There are many different paths, and clearly linking your studies with your goals will help lead to success. This means asking hard questions of yourself (what do I want to achieve?) and the programs you are considering (how does this program help get me there?). Also, NOW IS THE TIME to look at graduate school. An economic crisis is the perfect time to reskill and prepare for the next step.

Do you have any tips for students who are new to attending school remotely? As an adjunct professor for MTSU I have a unique perspective on this. Make sure you are checking in with your professors. They are here to help. If you have questions don't hesitate to send an email or set up a time during virtual office hours.

In what ways have you stayed connected with your alma mater? The Alumni Association is great to plug in to. Ginger and her team do a great job of keeping alumni connected. We are lucky to live close enough to still attend sporting and on-campus events, which we have loved introducing our son to.