

Allan Peoples (MBA, 2015)

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Allan Peoples works quietly at a small work station tucked between the printer and the copy machine at the Office of Student Research (OSR), calculating statistics for the program director and assisting graduate students with their research data. As OSR's first Peer Statistics Specialist, Allan manages data for peer leaders, helps design surveys, assists graduate students with statistics, and is often called on to pull together essential data for department reports. His modest demeanor masks unusual drive, an impressive personal history and a long list of accomplishments.

As testimony to his strong work ethic, earning an MBA in a single concentration while working 20 hours a week is not enough for Allan. He expanded his studies to include *two* concentrations, one in Marketing and one in Business Intelligence and Information Technology, and is completing his program within two years.

"Today, IT is integrated into the market research process," Allan said. "A marketing professional needs both sets of skills to use the resources to full capacity."

His interest in market research and his desire for a broader program initially lead him to pursue a marketing degree. But as he progressed through the program, he developed a greater interest in working with raw data and transforming it into useful information for business analysis, which lead him to include information technology in his studies.

Allan credits his background and army experience for his unusual capacity for work and school. Born in India, Allan received his bachelor's degree at Dehli University, one of the top universities in the country. Rather than go immediately to graduate school, Allan decided to join the Indian Army. "I come from a military family. My dad and uncles are all officers. It is a family legacy I wanted to contribute to." Allan was a Lieutenant in the Infantry, and also served full-time as a sportsman representing India in shooting competitions around the world. Due to his incredible marksmanship, he was named national champion in 2004, 2006 and 2012, set three national records and also won a handful of gold and silver medals in international competitions. His experiences as an officer and sportsman taught him the self-discipline and commitment he needed to reach his academic goals.

"Military training teaches comradery, responsibility and accountability, because as an officer the authority is in your hands," Allan said. "And it teaches you to be mentally robust. After military training you are mentally stronger. The little things that happen in life do not upset you and do not matter so much anymore. It also teaches you a lot about teamwork. You learn to assimilate these qualities into your leadership skills."

Allan turned these skills to his advantage at his graduate program at Cal State San Bernardino. The MBA program requires students to work in groups to complete assigned projects, and success hinges on team management and leadership skills. "My Army background helped me a lot with this." Allan said. "Sometimes there can be a lot of friction between group members, but by the end of the day, you have to get the job done."

Due to graduate in spring 2015, Allan hopes to continue to live and work in the U.S., either in the corporate sector or higher education, but adds, "we'll see what the future holds." He says he has enjoyed the challenges and hands-on approach of a U.S. education. "Education here is different from India in the sense that there's a lot of focus on application – we do exercises in case studies, analysis, constructing a business, and so on, that force you to apply the knowledge like you would in a real business situation."

Allan encourages graduate students to value these opportunities and "exercise the analytical side of your brain and put what you learn into practice." His advice to new students: "Focus on enjoying the journey through the master's program. It's tough, but it's worth the sacrifice."