

**Doug Smith, '06**

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Overall, I think the Iowa program had a very warm atmosphere marked by high access to professors. Additionally, **the most valuable experience at Iowa for me was being integrated on large, externally-funded research projects in my area of study, which made me a competitive candidate for jobs in research extensive universities.** Because of this involvement, I was awarded an NIH Loan Repayment contract (FY2008-FY200) and have extensive experience in how to pursue external funding. Thus, I've personally benefitted in terms of paying for my education, and also obtained grant writing skills desired by most research extensive universities that are increasingly encouraging faculty to obtain research grants.