

Marshal Blessing

University of Central Florida
Orlando, FL

Computer Engineer
Bachelor of Science, May 2004

**NASA Academy Research Project:
Simulation Testbed for Robotic
Exploration of a Martian Surface**

Principal Investigator: Dr. Jeffery Smith



Education:

I am a recent graduate of the University of Central Florida, where I majored in Computer Engineering and minored in Mathematics. Attending school near the Kennedy Space Center has allowed me to pursue my interests in space technology. For my senior design project, I worked with engineers from NASA and the Florida Space Institute on designing the control system for a satellite to test a Microwave Electro-thermal Thruster. However, such academic endeavors have kept me very busy. Perhaps that is why I have also developed a fascination with modern physics and time travel. I find I can always make time for studying such topics.

Experience:

My other main scientific interest is robotics. I spent last summer doing undergraduate research in the Mechatronics Laboratory at Clemson University. My work involved biologically inspired robotics, specifically manipulators mimicking trunks and tentacles. I found the subject gripping, and I was able to construct a working prototype tentacle actuator. My work also led to a research paper entitled "Continuum Robots with Variable-Length Sections", authored by myself and my faculty advisor, Dr. Ian Walker.

Extra-curricular Activities:

In my spare time, I like relaxing with friends and watching horror films. Unfortunately, not all of my hobbies can be as intellectually stimulating. I am a fan of board games, especially chess. In fact, I was formally a member of the UCF chess team. I am an art enthusiast, and enjoy photography and drawing. Athletically, my interests do not extend beyond billiards.

I plan on eventually earning an advanced degree in either computer technology or in physics, but in the mean time anticipate an amusing and enlightening summer of research in the NASA Academy. I look forward to meeting new people and expect that the program will provide me with experience that will be useful in achieving my ultimate goal of becoming an astronaut.