



Evelyn Tanikawa

MID-CAREER STUDENT | PURSUING MASTER'S DEGREE

Evelyn (“Ev” to her friends) grew up in the DFW area and initially graduated from the University of North Texas in 2003 with a bachelor’s degree in pre-med. She then went on to have a career working in hospital administration, where she generally excelled.

Lately though, she has felt burned out by the pace of work that increased since the pandemic. In 2021, she decided to make a career switch after taking time off to care for an ailing parent.

She has a knack for writing, and decided to focus on roles that allow her to work remotely. She now works for a biotech firm based in New York, which offers a reimbursement perk for continuing education. She decided to go “back” to school and pursue a formal degree, to further solidify her marketability as a communicator.

When weighing options for an MA in technical communication, she considered several schools. Ultimately, UNT made the top of her list for the following reasons.

- She was already familiar with UNT
- The program can be done remotely
- It is more affordable than other schools
- She has heard Dr. Friess is legendary
- Taking the GRE is not a requirement

After she graduates, she wants to pursue a vice president role with her biotech employer. Alternatively, she would like to work in the medical division of a larger tech company. She believes this degree will be strategic and important to achieving her goals.

“The business world tends to judge a woman based on their perception rather than her actual ability. So, I want to show I have the bona fide credentials to back up my talent.”

— Ev Tanikawa

Additional info:

- Evelyn describes herself as 41 years young. She currently works as a project manager.
- Ev is a go-getter. In high school, she played soccer and was on the cross country running team.
- If someone tells her something is impossible, that often makes her want to prove them wrong.
- She is a self-described “dog person” and has a Golden Labrador that she dotes on. She occasionally volunteers with the SPCA, helping care for rescued and stray animals.



Sven Sigmarson

EARLY CAREER STUDENT | PURSUING CERTIFICATION

Sven grew up in Norway, and graduated from the University of Oslo in 2022 with a bachelor’s degree in computer science. He recently moved to the Dallas area to work for AT&T, and is doing his best to adjust to the comparatively hotter Texas weather.

He aspires to pursue a C-suite role eventually, but feels like he needs to further his education to help himself stand out amongst other candidates. He loves to read classic literature. Though he is fluent in English, he wants to improve upon his overall ability to convey ideas in a clear and convincing manner.

Realizing there may be gaps between his more tech-focused background and the nuanced communication skills he needs to further his career, he decided to look into DFW colleges to take additional classes. He heard about UNT from a coworker and decided to apply for the technical writing certificate program.

The following are some of the factors he considered.

- Async classes that work with his schedule
- Driving distance proximity of the Denton campus
- Online classes, in case he needs to return to Norway
- Certificate program as a pathway to a master’s degree
- Highly recommended by peers who were UNT students

After he completes his certificate, he is considering pursuing an MA in technical communication. So far, he has enjoyed his time as a UNT student and is looking forward to seeing what new doors of opportunity may open as a result of his continued education.

“I know where I want to go in my career, but am not exactly sure how to get there. I figure the best way to predict my future is to actively invest in improving my skills.”

— Sven Sigmarson

Additional info:

- Sven is 24 years old. He works as a junior software engineer, with tech leadership aspirations.
- Sven tends to be reserved in his demeanor and cautious in his decision making. He is not risk averse, but wants to be sure he is making the right moves.
- This is manifested by his interest in indoor and outdoor rock climbing. He weighs pros/cons and then takes the next step when he is on sure footing.
- Texas is horribly flat for his tastes, but he is thankful that there are at least climbing gyms nearby.