

THURSDAY CAREERS CHATS

Date of Session: _____ Title of Session: Careers in the Foreign Service

Alumni Presenter: Ambassador David Johnson Class Year: P '11

Title: _____ Employer: _____

Notes from Session:

Ambassador Johnson indicated that it can take quite a while to make it through the Foreign Service <<http://careers.state.gov/officer/selection-process>> testing process, which is divided between a written exam, which one takes at a testing service and an oral exam, which includes a group exercise and takes place in selected cities. While efforts have been made over years to streamline the process, it can still take up to a year before one's results are known. Because of this as well as the competitive nature of the entry process, many applicants gain experience in other areas prior to entering the Foreign Service. While a small percentage continue to enter directly after college, most entrants have either work experience or advanced degrees, or both, before they enter. The average age at entry varies from year to year but usually approaches thirty.

Most Foreign Service officers start out as consular officers <<http://careers.state.gov/learn/who-we-are/employee-experiences?movname=jayne>>, working either in the consular section at an embassy or at a consulate in a regional center outside a country's capital. In these jobs, you help US citizens with emergencies and other issues and adjudicate applications to immigrate to or visit the United States. The Foreign Service requires new entrants to be "worldwide available" and officers should expect to be relocated every one to three years when serving abroad and at least every five years when serving in Washington throughout their careers.

Gaining language proficiency can make you more competitive, especially if you have expertise in a "super-hard" language, such as Arabic or Chinese. The entry process, at least from a statistical point of view, is very competitive."