

My undergraduate degree is from **Smith College**, a small liberal arts college. I was a math major and chemistry minor who took a lot of computer science courses. I knew I wanted to apply that mathematical thinking to 'save the world' in some way (lofty thinking ... isn't that what undergrads do?), but I had no idea how to do that, never really having heard of statistics or public health at that time.

I knew I wanted to go back to graduate school, so I asked my senior colleagues at MPR what kind of degree would help me get back to doing the type of work being done there. Statistics emerged as the best choice for me. I considered many programs around the country. After many conversations, I ended up at **Harvard**, which gave me my preferred geographic location and the content areas I was hoping to study. In particular, I was excited to work with Don Rubin, who I knew was one of the people who straddled statistics and public policy.

At Harvard, I stayed focused on the public policy world, doing my dissertation work using data from education and working with Alan Zaslavsky from the department of health care policy on census-related topics and Gary King from the government department.

