

Nateé Johnson Selected for Data Science Fellowship

ALEXANDRIA, VA (May 2019) – Nateé Johnson, a research associate at the Institute for Defense Analyses (IDA) was recently selected for a Flatiron School DC Data Science Fellowship.

Founded in 2012, Flatiron School offers online and in-person programs across the world to provide the skills, community, and immersive, outcomes-driven curriculum needed to launch careers in software engineering, data science, or UX/UI design. “The school’s founders started the school as a way to help professionals who want to pivot in their career,” Johnson says.

With an acceptance rate of around 6%, Flatiron School looks for a cultural fit, aptitude, passion, and grit. Johnson underwent a competitive interview process that entailed a written application, a cultural interview, and a technical interview, which required her to complete a code challenge.

During the 15 week, full-time fellowship, the curriculum offers intensive training in exploratory data analysis and descriptive statistics, Python coding, advanced data retrieval and analysis, machine learning, deep learning, and other related modules with a master project at the end.

“My exposure to data science at IDA from various tasks I’ve helped with made me wish I had learned it earlier,” Johnson says. “There is a process of having large amounts of data from sponsors, digesting the data, making sense of it, drawing conclusions, and communicating it back to them.”

There are many benefits of the fellowship that drew Johnson in. “The intensive training offers structure and an engaging curriculum, without a two-year commitment,” she says. The fellowship is centered on building intentional communities with a small cohort of no more than 20 people. “They are interested in finding people who are passionate, and down to earth. There is an opportunity to do things as you learn and receive hands-on experience.”

Johnson’s advice to others who may be searching for a similar opportunity is that it is never too late to learn something new and make the shift. “The Flatiron Fellowship program respects that and supports non-traditional students,” Johnson says.

“Going through the fellowship and solving problems will help add value to IDA tasks and expertise,” she says. She plans to take away everything the program has to offer, increase her proficiency, and bolster analytical skills that will be immediately useful and in the long-term, fill gaps with data communications.

Johnson earned her bachelor’s degree in mechanical engineering from the University of Maryland, Baltimore County in 2011. In 2016, she earned a master’s degree in mechanical engineering from Carnegie Mellon University. She is a member of the Society of Women Engineers, the National Society of Black Engineers, and Toastmasters International.

IDA is a not-for-profit corporation that operates three Federally Funded Research and Development Centers in the public interest. IDA provides objective analyses of national security issues and related national challenges, particularly those requiring extraordinary scientific, technical, and analytic expertise.

