

**From:** Alexa Staley <[REDACTED]>

**To:** Boris Nikolic <[REDACTED]>

**Bcc:** jeevacation@gmail.com

**Subject:** Re: Seattle...

**Date:** Sat, 12 May 2012 01:41:57 +0000

**Attachments:** Staley\_Resume.pdf

---

Hi Boris,

Sorry it took me so long to get back you; I have had finals back to back for the past few days.

I am not sure if it was me or my sister who made that comment about Peter, but it was a very inspiring movie and I definitely got to learn a lot more about my uncle through it.

This summer I am actually going to be living in Richland, WA working at the LIGO detector. I am not sure if you are familiar with the detector, but it is a laser interferometer that is currently being upgraded in hopes of detecting a gravitational wave. While at the detector I will be working with Daniel Sigg from Caltech who will assign me a project.

My interests have always been around general relativity, gravitational waves, and cosmology, so I hope this summer will provide me with insight on the experimental side of these areas and allow me to learn about the detector. My adviser at Columbia, Professor Szablocs Marka, and I are hoping that my thesis will encompass an experimental part and one involving astrophysics. Thus, my summer at LIGO will hopefully provide me a great foundation for the beginning of my dissertation.

Looking farther down the road though, truthfully, I am not sure what I want to do. I really love physics, and I have found that I enjoy teaching as well from being a TA this year. It is likely that after my PhD I will remain in academia/research. However, a part of me is also drawn to the more "industrial" side that physics opens doors to. What I mean is that, yes, I really enjoy the research I am doing, but its benefit to society is not so immediate; I think being a part of SpaceX or Nathan Myhrvold's lab would be a great combination of doing physics and also having a large impact on society today.

I know this is a bit of a rant, and I am not sure if this is the answer you were looking for, but I thought that maybe you would be a good person to talk to about this. My hope, when I visit Seattle, is to see how physics can merge with industry, and whether its something I am interested in and would excel at. Unfortunately, I am not sure if I will be able to take days off work at LIGO or what my hours are going to be like, so that may limit my trip to Seattle; in particular, I might only be able to come for a weekend, but again I will keep you posted.

Yes, I did apply for the Hertz fellowship which I did not get awarded. As I am being honest, I was not really that surprised about not getting the fellowship since I wasn't really sure about what my research project was going to be. Hopefully, by next year when I re-apply, I will have a much better vision of what is to come and what my goals are.

I have attached my CV for your reference.

Best,  
Alexa

On Tue, May 8, 2012 at 2:27 AM, Boris Nikolic <[REDACTED]> wrote:

Thank you!

Please give him my best regards.

As well as to your uncle Peter (were you the niece that told him after the recent movie that you did not know how crazy he was ;) ???

Please let me know as soon as you know your dates better. It is good that it is in June as I am traveling 90% of May.

Also it would be great to better understand what are you planning to do in Seattle areas, what are your interest, would you like to achieve etc.

This would allow me to help more!

It would be great If you can send me your resume.

So far I understand that you applied for a Hertz fellow program.

This is something I can probably help a lot,

Looking forward to meeting you soon!

Boris

**From:** Alexa Staley [mailto: ]

**Sent:** Monday, May 07, 2012 5:34 PM

**To:** Boris Nikolic

**Subject:** Re: Seattle...

Dear Boris,

Thank you for the kind words. My father says hello.

I will be in Washington from May 26th-August 4th; so I was thinking of coming to Seattle some time in June or July. I will touch base once I am in Washington and have a better idea of what my work schedule, etc is

going to be like.

Best,

Alexa

On Mon, May 7, 2012 at 2:01 AM, Boris Nikolic <[REDACTED]> wrote:

Thank you [REDACTED]!

Alexa great meeting you – just let me know whenever you are coming to Seattle and let's meet.

I will be traveling most of May but June looks great.

You have great father and uncle – and I heard that this time an apple did not fall from the three ;)

All the best

Boris

---

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Sunday, May 06, 2012 10:57 PM  
**To:** Alexa Staley  
**Cc:** Philip Eckhoff ([REDACTED]); Boris Nikolic  
**Subject:** Seattle...

Hi there Alexa from Ethiopia – sorry it's taken me a few days to get to my laptop.

I'm sending this mail to make a quick introduction to a few people in Seattle that I think you will enjoy meeting and that I would like for you to hang out with while here.

First things first –

**Boris/Philip:** Alexa is pursuing a PhD in physics at Columbia University and this summer she will be in lovely eastern Washington doing research at LIGO. She has also recently applied for a Hertz fellowship.

**Alexa:** Philip works for Intellectual Ventures as well as Global Good (which we discussed a tiny bit), but is deeply involved in the Hertz world. Boris is science advisor to Bill Gates, as well as my best friend in the universe. (I have other best friends in different universes, FYI) 😊

Even though I am sure we will have time this summer to get together in the 10 weeks you will be in Washington, it might make sense to talk to Boris and Philip sooner since you might stretch your time a bit and find some cool things to see/do.

I don't have a lab, I only do clinical work at the UW – and I am on service for 2 weeks in August so you are always welcome on either Neurology or Neurosurgery rounds with me/my team. Or, you can come hang out at the Gates Foundation (my real job) with me anytime you'd like!

Warm regards to you all...

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]



 Please consider the environment before printing this e-mail