



# Sloan Career Cornerstone Center

## Profiles of Computer Scientists



**Sidney Rankin**

**Systems Engineer**  
**TASC, Inc.**  
**Reston, VA**

### **Education:**

B.S. - Mathematics, College of William and Mary  
M.S. - Computer Science

### **Job Description:**

Systems Engineer, managing a project developing a classified network.

### **Advice to Students:**

"Take computer classes. The combination of the math and the computers, especially in today's society, really gives you an edge."

### **Comments:**

Sidney spends much of her work week out of her office and at the customer's site, a situation that gives her a greater sense of responsibility.

### **Video Transcript 1:**

Okay. I guess the basic skills I use day to day are the problem-solving skills that you learn in math and the analytical thinking. And also when I'm programming, you know, you're going to come across problem that you need to do calculations. So that's where math definitely comes into play. Also, now that I'm more of a project manager, I have to keep track of the budget, where all my -- where the costs are going, how much does a person cost, so I can decide if they're going to be able to come onto the project, and not depending on their labor rate. So those types of things come into play. You need to know mathematics to be able to figure out that and estimate, so that you can keep the customer on track.

### **Video Transcript 2:**

Right now, I'm sort of at a splitting point, I guess. I could take three different paths. Within TASC, you have what's called a technical path, where I could just stay technical and not do too much management. Or you can take a project management path where you, you know, just manage projects, but you don't necessarily do line management, like you're not in charge of giving reviews and stuff that like; you're more customer oriented. Or you can take what's called the line management path where you're responsible for, you know, the careers of like six or

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seven individuals, and you need to help them, you know, move up within the organization. And, at this point, I'm leaning towards the line management and the project management paths. I'm sort of doing the project management at this point. But they have slated me as being a line manager to come.