



## Discovering a Passion

**Thomas Nance** stepped up as the “man of the house” when his father left to serve with the Army Reserve in Iraq during Nance’s senior year of high school. As the only child left at home, he felt the need to take care of his mother and prepare more carefully for a future career and adult life. Although his three older siblings had graduated from college, Nance graduated high school without having applied to a university. He felt a lack of direction regarding where to attend college but after speaking with an education counselor, Nance enrolled for a summer term at BYU followed by night classes during fall semester.

While attending BYU, Nance solidified his testimony of the Church with religion classes that supported his desire to serve a mission. He departed in 2006 to serve in Yerevan, Armenia, where he learned of and grew to love a culture different than his own. Nance was welcomed by warm, hospitable people with a passion for life he had not witnessed

in the United States. In addition to growing spiritually, he became convinced he wanted to learn more about the culture of the Middle East and perhaps work internationally. Nance became close with an American family on his mission who worked as a diplomat for the U.S. Embassy. The family had moved from Moscow to Kuwait to Beijing for work and that kind of travel interested Nance. Returning home from his mission, he was eager to explore the international world and quickly declared an international relations major.

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While his mission opened his eyes to a new world, it was Model United Nations that taught Nance to see the world from a global perspective. The class helped Nance form a habit of checking international current events daily, and taught him debate, communication, and leadership skills that eventually benefited him on a professional level. The class prepared Nance and his classmates for the mock UN competition in New York, where they worked with other schools to draft resolutions to aid in solving international issues. Nance and his partner were one of only five out of 219 partnerships awarded a committee award at the end of the competition, and he came away with valuable experience that helped prepare him for future career options.

No Events