

JUST WHO ARE THE STUDENTS STUDYING AT HANKAMER THESE DAYS? THE STUDENTS PROFILED HERE ARE A SMALL REPRESENTATION OF THE DIVERSE STUDENT BODY THAT WILL IMPACT THE WORLD IN A VARIETY OF WAYS AS THEY BECOME FUTURE BUSINESS LEADERS WITH INTEGRITY.

BEAR

IN THE

HALLS OF

HANKAM

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Derek Epperson

Senior
Information Systems
and Management



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BY KRISTIN TODD STIRES

It's fourth down and Derek Epperson steps onto the football field. His performance is crucial — the entire team, coaches and fans are depending on his pinpoint accuracy of placing the ball exactly where it needs to go. The pressure mounts, but Epperson remains calm and focused for precise execution of the punt.

As Baylor's starting punter, Epperson grew up actually kicking a soccer ball; however, he started kicking a football — and was good at it.

"I played on my high school football team and was offered a scholarship to attend Baylor and play football," he said. "It was a great opportunity; Baylor was close to home and had a good academic reputation."

Athletic genes run in the Epperson family: his mom is a former international trampolining competitor, his sister signed to play soccer for the University of Louisiana-Monroe, and his brother plays football as well — as the punter for Texas A&M University.

"I did play against my brother last season," he said. "Some of my family members flew in for the game and made T-shirts that were half green and half maroon. My brother and I are competitive and both wanted to win, but we wanted to see each other do well. It's a little surreal to see two siblings in the Big 12 that are both starters playing the same position."

Epperson was recognized with various honors his freshman year and has racked up awards and nominations since then. He is a two-time watch list member

(semifinalist in 2008) for the Ray Guy Award, which honors the best collegiate punters in the nation. In 2009, he was named a mid-season All-American by CBSsports.com; projected a preseason All-American by Lindy's, Rivals.com and Sporting News; and has consistently earned All-Big 12 honors throughout his career.

Epperson has learned to master the juggling act of academics and athletics, holding a double major in Information Systems and Management, while being a three-time member of the Big 12 Commissioner's Honor Roll.

"My mom was a teacher, and I was always taught school comes first," he said. "I took a lot of AP courses in high school, which helped me establish a good work ethic when I started at Baylor. I also think football helped me become more organized; it's like working a full-time job with the hours we put in. It provides a structure for time management though. You have to be productive or you can get swamped if you're taking challenging courses."

As for the future, Epperson has been accepted to Baylor's MBA program and has high hopes for playing in the NFL.

"If I'm given the opportunity to play in the NFL, it would be a blessing," Epperson said. "But I do want to get my MBA so I have a good education and am able to have a successful career no matter what happens."





Haylee Abbe

Senior
Accounting

Baylor has been a part of **Haylee Abbe's** life for awhile now. Her dad, Rick Abbe, and mom, Suzanne Abbe, both attended Baylor; her mom is currently a senior lecturer in the Accounting department; older sister Heather graduated from Baylor a few years ago; younger sister Hannah is currently a student; and younger brother Hunter might be a future Baylor Bear. "We're definitely a Baylor family – born and bred," she said. "I've been coming to games since I was 5 years old, wearing a cheerleader uniform. When I received the opportunity to play basketball for Baylor, I was definitely excited."

Abbe played on the Lady Bears basketball team her freshman and sophomore year then split her time between studying and campus organizations. She serves as secretary of Beta Alpha Psi, the international honorary organization for financial information students; is a member of Chi Omega sorority; and a member of Baylor Business Women.

"Business is going global in every aspect, not just accounting."

Abbe also served as a 2009-2010 CEO (president) of Baylor's Business Excellence and Scholarship Team (BEST) program, which is an interactive, project-based, strategic management program. During her time in BEST, Abbe had the opportunity to travel to the Dominican Republic (DR) and met with different professionals, conducted case analysis, and worked with social entrepreneurship efforts.

"I really thrive in the team environment, with my sports background, and enjoyed working on the group projects in BEST," she said. "The experience in the DR definitely opened my eyes to other parts of the world. It made me want to work harder because we have been blessed and doors have been opened to so many opportunities. Our goal was to go over and help others, but really the people impacted us as individuals and as a class."

During the spring 2010 semester, Abbe traveled overseas again to complete KPMG's Global Internship Program. She was one of six students nationwide chosen for the spring internship. The 10-week, whirlwind internship included two weeks of training in Dallas with two weeks devoted to an audit client; four weeks in London working on a client project; and one more week of an audit client in Dallas with a final week serving as a volunteer civic week.

"Business is going global in every aspect, not just accounting," Abbe said. "A lot of firms are moving in that direction, and it's very beneficial. The fact that firms are putting so much time and resources on global opportunities, even just for interns, says a lot. KPMG has a lot of global clients, and establishing an overseas network base, I think, has helped me gain a more global mindset."

Abbe has a good idea of what to expect in the future after completing the five-year program to earn her BBA and Master of Accountancy degrees.

"I've accepted an offer to work for KPMG in Dallas in audit," she said. "Accounting has been a great major for job placement. It's nice that I don't have to worry about searching for a job during my last year so I can focus on my classes and graduating."

Choosing a university to attend can be a difficult decision, but imagine attending a university you had never visited, in another country, on a different continent, over 6,500 miles from where you lived.

Living in Lagos, Nigeria, that's exactly what **Oludamilola "Dami" Adekoya** did after applying online to Baylor.

"I saw the pictures of campus on the website when I applied," he said. "My dad was an architect, so I have an appreciation for architectural design and thought Baylor looked like a prestigious campus."

But it wasn't just appearances that sold Adekoya on Baylor — he also received input from friends and family.

"I learned about the university from a few seniors at Baylor who had gone to my high school, Loyola Jesuit College," he said. "Also, a deacon in my church talked to me about Baylor. My family was anxious

but excited for me after I was accepted. One of my older brothers had gone to Canada, so it was a little easier for me to leave home after him."

Originally pre-med, Adekoya is now double majoring in Economics and Finance and has been accepted to the business school's BEST program.

"I like the integration of the Christian faith and academics here at Baylor," he said. "I think economics is fascinating, and I thought finance would provide good training for my business career. I applied to BEST for all the opportunities and the interesting projects. I'm really looking forward to the class."

Adekoya hasn't been home in two years and admits to getting homesick, but he has joined campus organizations that keep him engaged. He's the 2010-2011 vice president of finance for Alpha Kappa Psi, a professional business fraternity; and the 2010-2011 treasurer for the African Students Association (ASA).

"I like the business, social and service aspects that are covered in Alpha Kappa Psi," he said. "I have weekly meetings for both Alpha Kappa Psi and ASA. For ASA, we hold a weekend in the fall with universities from all over Texas that come to campus to put on a talent show and share cultural activities."

There's a small group of Nigerians on campus, and I know many of them from ASA. We'll get together and reminisce about Nigeria."

As far as cultural differences, Adekoya said he's become acclimated to American culture and adapted to Texas as well — he's now a big fan of Mexican food. He has kept his love of Reggae music, which he said is popular in Nigeria, and still enjoys soccer, which he played in high school and is the national sport of Nigeria.

"I've gotten used to watching American sports," he said. "Although, Americans waste so much time between plays, like in football. I like watching soccer when they play straight through!"

After graduation, Adekoya hopes to continue his education with earning an MBA and may leave his legacy through entering politics.

"I would like to work at an investment bank or firm and definitely earn an MBA," he said. "I would like to return to Nigeria eventually, go into politics and affect change within the country."



Oludamilola

Sophomore
Economics and Finance

"Dami" Adekoya



Joseph Walter

Junior
Baylor Business Fellows,
Accounting, Economics,
and Finance

Joseph Walter has a few more majors than the average student at Hankamer: Baylor Business Fellows, Accounting, Economics, and Finance; with a minor in Mathematics. The Baylor Business Fellows major is the conduit for his studies and the reason Walter ended up at Baylor in the first place.

Initially, he planned on majoring in Accounting only, but after learning about the Fellows major from Allen Seward, professor and director of Baylor Business Fellows, Walter added a few more fields of study to his agenda.

"The Fellows major was what made me decide to come to Baylor," he said. "Basically, I was deciding between going Ivy League and attending Baylor. My brother and sister had both gone to Baylor, and I also received a scholarship when I applied."

Baylor Business Fellows, first offered in fall 2007, serves as a prestigious major that leads to a BBA degree. With this major,

highly motivated students may focus on several fields of study (with additional majors), and Fellows allows for students to customize their degree plan through an interdisciplinary approach.

"Fellows is such a unique major that would be difficult to find elsewhere," Walter said. "It gives me a lot of elective hours and customizes my degree plan where I take classes I enjoy that can be applied to my future. I definitely don't have any regrets coming to Baylor as opposed to going Ivy League."

Walter has done well handling his academic load. He is a member of Beta Alpha Psi, the international honorary organization for financial information students; Beta Gamma Sigma, the international scholastic honor society for business students; and has been accepted to Baylor's BEST program.

But don't think Walter is chained to a desk studying all day. He is involved

with campus organizations as a member of International Justice Mission and the Baylor University Mathematics Society. Walter is an avid mountain biker and enjoys woodworking, video editing and rebuilding classic cars — he finished a 1974 Gran Torino in high school. You could say he has a knack for entrepreneurship as well. At age 13, he started his own computer company, building customized systems.

Additionally, Walter's had his fair share of globetrotting. He has traveled extensively, working with his older brother who works for PHM Foundation in Dallas, and for mission trips and family vacations.

"I've been to 14 countries outside the U.S.: New Zealand, Singapore, Nepal, Bhutan, some European countries, and Central and South America," he said. "Traveling gives you more of an objective view of the world."

After he graduates, Walter intends to earn a CPA and go into accounting and possibly consulting. He hopes to earn a few more passport stamps as well.

"I really think that traveling is one of the most important things," he said. "It's essential, especially in the business world, to understand the value of different opinions and the way others think. You start to see the world differently."