

In this economy, going into an interview without experience is like going into an interview wearing pajamas. Good luck.

An internship lends necessary credibility to an applicant. Employers need to know whether the applicant is as capable as his or her well-crafted resume claims.

Baylor's Graduate Accounting program offers two degrees: a Master of Accountancy (MAcc) and a Master of Taxation (MTax). Both tracks offer a five-year program, which combines the master's degree with a Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA) and waives 12 undergraduate elective hours.

The program encourages and gives students the tools necessary to intern during their junior year.

"In today's market, most permanent entry-level job offers in accounting are a result of a successful internship, so it's imperative that we do all we can to help our students obtain an internship," said Charles Davis, department chair of Accounting and Business Law.

These graduate accounting students, now seniors, have already secured jobs after graduation through their internships. Each experience is unique, but each one of them gained important insight into their future careers.

# GRADUATE ACCOUNTING INTERNSHIPS COUNTING ON A TRANSFORMATION

Copperas Cove student Bruce Moss completed a 10-week tax internship at Deloitte, one of the Big Four accounting firms. Big Four firms are considered the biggest and most prestigious public accounting firms. They include Ernst & Young, Deloitte, KPMG and PricewaterhouseCoopers.

"The Baylor recruiting program does a really good job at exposing students to firms and setting up all of the social functions we have with the corporations," Moss said.

The department believes in the importance of internships so much that they brought in Anthony Herrera to be the director of internships and career development last January.

Herrera said his job is to help prepare students for life after Baylor with counseling to improve leadership, social, presentation and

resume-building skills. He organizes Career Days, lunches with corporations called "Lunch and Learn," and firm presentations to acquaint students with their career options, in addition to organizing internship and job recruiting.

"Herrera's experiences in both the audit and tax worlds and his professional recruiting experience make him an invaluable resource to our students," Davis said.

In addition to professors, students also recommend interning as an important learning experience because it augments class work and gives them a 'test drive' for their futures.

"It gives you real-world experience you can't get out of a lecture hall," Moss said.

If one internship is good, two are even better. Singapore student Wei Wong interned

at ConocoPhillips and Ernst & Young in 2008 and 2009, respectively, eventually accepting a job at ConocoPhillips, which will begin August 2010.

"One of the greatest decisions I've made was doing two internships," Wong said.

"Most people don't have time to do two."

Wong was able to compare the two and decide which job was a better fit for him. Picking from two internships is a luxury most students don't get in accounting.

While most Baylor accounting students begin their careers in public accounting, Wong decided to begin his career in corporate accounting.

"I enjoyed the time at Ernst & Young, but I didn't enjoy the work as much as I did at ConocoPhillips," Wong said.



Kathleen Simpson also completed two internships – at Ernst & Young and the FBI. But she already knew what career path she would take before stepping foot into either internship.

Simpson, a Georgetown native, has known since the sixth grade that she wanted to be an FBI agent.

“My major was driven by my career choice,” Simpson said. “Most students’ majors determine their career.”

She interned last summer at FBI Headquarters in Washington, D.C., after a rigorous application process including multiple interviews, a polygraph test and a background check.

“I chose Baylor primarily because of the recognition, but also because of the integrity and ethics built into the program,” Simpson said. “It’s a desirable trait for all jobs, but especially for a job that requires a background check.”

Before applying to be an FBI agent, applicants must have experience in their field of study, so Simpson will work at Ernst & Young after receiving her diploma. She plans on applying to be an agent after gaining work experience at Ernst & Young.

Mansfield student David Hall also wants to join the FBI. At his internship last spring, he worked on litigation support, business evaluation and fraud investigations at KPMG in the Forensics department.

“The internship helped solidify that I wanted to do this,” Hall said.

Hall said all his Baylor classes helped him at his internship. He used knowledge from business classes including finance, tax, business law, and, of course, accounting. He said fraud adds diversity to the work that other firms don’t have.

“I like the pace and the change of the work ... you don’t usually get that in audit or tax,” Hall said.

All four of the students highly recommend internships to their peers. Each of them received job offers through their internships.

“Before you decide what you’re going to do for the rest of your life, make sure you’re going to enjoy it,” Simpson said.

Moss said interning is valuable because “it gets you out of your comfort zone.” It’s an important step, especially for people in their early 20s, he said.

When asked what advice he would pass on to future graduates, Wong encouraged studying and living abroad. He lived abroad for 16 years, and said it helped him network and have a broader understanding of the world.

“Today’s business is so global – you have to understand how to effectively conduct business with people who don’t have the same mindset as you,” Wong said. “It helped me build relationships.”

Internships translated into full-time jobs after graduation not only for these students but for most students in Baylor’s Graduate Accounting program.

“A high percentage of internships translate into full-time opportunities,” Herrera said. “It prepares you for real life experience.”

Ultimately, internships give students the opportunity to get a glimpse of their future before graduation, and understand potential career responsibilities.

“Interning was a nice illustration of what to expect,” Moss said. “I’m ready for my future career.”



# DAVID KATHLEEN BRUCE WEI

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