

# A Higher-Level Problem Solver

BY / KEVIN TANKERSLEY

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WHETHER IT'S RESOLVING AN ONGOING CAMPUS PARKING ISSUE OR DEVELOPING SOLUTIONS FOR E-COMMERCE RETAILERS, CHEYENNE ATCHISON OFTEN APPROACHES CHALLENGES FROM AN UNCONVENTIONAL ANGLE.

When Cheyenne Atchison and her classmates were assigned a group project in a Management Information Systems (MIS) class, they decided to address what seems to be a never-ending problem on a college campus: a lack of parking. But instead of adding more parking space, the group instead looked at “a higher-level issue, and that’s how students are getting to campus,” Atchison said.

“What’s the transportation issue? How can we eliminate this problem by simply eliminating the amount of people who need their cars to get to campus? Essentially, we created a reward system to incentivize students to get to campus through walking or biking or taking the Baylor-provided buses instead of using their cars,” she said.

The rewards would be based on the number of steps a student walked to get from home to campus, or how far the student rode a bike or how often the student took a bus. And, based on those numbers, students would accumulate points and earn rewards from local businesses.

“You could get a free pizza pillow from Shorty’s Pizza Shack, something like that,” Atchison said.

The assignment was part of the Accenture Innovation Challenge in Hope Koch’s MIS 3305 class in the fall of 2018.

“The project is actually a good way for them to put into practice all the technology topics that I teach them,” Koch, the Godfrey Sullivan Associate Professor of Information Systems, said. “And those topics are also very similar to the technologies that Accenture uses.”

Accenture is “one of the best and biggest consulting firms in the world,” Koch said, and students present the results of their project to Accenture managers, who choose the best project in the class.

While Atchison and her teammates didn’t win the Accenture challenge—they finished third, but still earned an A—it did bring her to the attention of the company’s representatives, and she was offered an internship with Accenture for the summer after her junior year. During her internship, Atchison, who studied marketing, was paired with an MIS major from Texas A&M.

“As far as understanding the project that we were assigned from Accenture, we were very much on par,” she said. “The foundational understanding that I gained from 3305 was immensely helpful in my internship.”

On the last day of her internship, Atchison signed a contract for a job after graduation, which she started in November 2020.

“I came into my senior year with a full-time offer,” Atchison said. “That allowed me to not only focus on my studies during my senior year, but also just to relax and enjoy my senior year instead of focusing on the job market.”

Atchison is now a senior consulting analyst in Accenture’s Dallas office.

“Right now, a lot of my work focuses on customer experience and innovation and how we’re able to provide our clients and their customers the best online experience, especially with our retail clients,” she said. “In my current project, I strategize a lot of the issues that customers are seeing in our retail client e-commerce sites, and then I’m helping to pitch and prototype solutions and test them out and validate our hypotheses.”

Fortune may have been smiling on Atchison as she landed what was the perfect internship for her. But even a less-than-ideal internship has its benefits, she said.

“Any experience is better than none,” Atchison said. “Not every internship or first job will be ideal, but even learning what you don’t like is helpful in the long run. I truly believe you can learn and grow from any experience. Whether you enjoyed it or not, that experience can eventually lead you to better opportunities.”

