Corporate internships and mentoring programs prepare students for careers in business

During the past several years, Delaware State University and several corporations with offices or headquarters in the region have developed internship and mentoring partnerships through the Office of Development for DSU students.

The programs provide opportunities for students to gain knowledge and transferrable skills through hands-on experience, helping to prepare them to become the “first choice of employers,” a goal cited in DSU’s Vision Statement.

Barclaycard Mentor Program

The first program to be developed, the DSU/Barclaycard Mentor Program, continues its success from the initial launch in spring 2012. The program has experienced tremendous growth since its inception.

Eleven students participated as the program’s third group of interns in spring 2014, with four returning from the first cohort. Students attended a six-week training course in Advanced Excel. Additionally, the training was offered to focus on core competencies and prepare students for project-requiring data analysis. Students also handled project-based assignments given by their mentors in the areas of credit risk and marketing analytics.

At the end of the semester, each intern is expected to facilitate a 30-minute formal presentation. Through the internships, students gain knowledge and transferrable skills relevant to the banking industry, including: Customer analytics; taking large sets of data and framing the information to make evidence-based decisions; working on projects and understanding the processes from beginning to end; and levels of preparation and familiarity with manipulating data using software programs.

Meet an intern | Clarence J. Banks

Clarence J. Banks, a senior Management — Finance and Banking major from Wilmington, Del., graduating in May, has taken part in the Barclaycard Mentor Program each spring semester since its inception.

Banks interned in Credit Risk and Strategic Analytics at Barclaycard US, where he gained experience in completing market research of new account credit card offerings, compiling industry information and making comparisons, and supporting strategy documentation and auditing of new account credit policies.

Banks also had the opportunity to take part in internships the past two summers at Monsanto in St. Louis, Mo. On campus, he is a senior resident assistant, Alpha Scholar, president of the National Society of Collegiate Scholars, chairperson of the Accounting & Finance Club, chapter treasurer of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity Inc., former treasurer of the Men’s Council and a mentor. Within the community, he is an active volunteer. He has received academic and community service awards through the College of Business and works to maintain a high GPA while staying active.

What are the most important skills that you took away from your internship?

“Soft skills that I can apply to many other things — and not just business. I have learned how to communicate properly, the art of networking, and the importance of business etiquette. Skills like this can be used for anything in life. I have also improved my technical skills — skills such as finance and learning how to use different computer software.”

What are your career goals?

“My ultimate career goal is to become a chief financial officer of a Fortune 100 company and eventually become an entrepreneur. With my campus involvement and past internship experience, I had four job offers. I accepted a job offer in Newark, N.J., at the company headquarters of Prudential Financial. I’ll be a financial analyst in the FLDP program (a rotation program targeted at high potential accounting and finance associates).”

What is your favorite part about being a Hornet?

“Meeting people that are willing to help you and embrace you no matter what background you have. DSU is one big diverse family. The atmosphere, students, faculty and staff made me have a great and memorable experience — from the maintenance staff cracking jokes and watching you grow, to the president of the University sitting down with you to see what he can improve. We are DSU Hornet family making our mark on the world!”

Barclaycard Mentor Program

The first program to be developed, the DSU/Barclaycard Mentor Program, continues its success from the initial launch in spring 2012. The program has experienced tremendous growth since its inception.

Eight students from the College of Business majoring in Management Information Systems and the College of Mathematics, Natural Sciences and Technology majoring in Computer Science were the initial participants in the program, gaining experience in the scope of services offered by JPMorgan, and specific job requirements. Since the inception, three students have been offered full-time jobs after graduation.

Meet a participant | Alejandra Rodriguez

Alejandra Rodriguez of Bath, Maine, a senior Management major with a concentration in Management Information Systems, was among the first students involved in the JPMorgan Chase and Co. Technology Mentor Program pilot program this academic year.

During her time at DSU, Rodriguez has been on President’s List four out of five semesters and the Dean’s List the other semester. She was part of ROTC, completing Field Training (Boot Camp) the summer after her sophomore year and receiving academic and participation awards. She was inducted into Beta Gamma Sigma, the College of Business Honor Society, and this spring was working on being inducted into The National Society of Leadership and Success.

Rodriguez recently accepted an offer with JPMorgan for its Operations Analyst Development Program with direct placement in Anti-Money Laundering Operations, which begins in July. She also plans to continue her education and pursue a Master of Business Administration.

What is the most important knowledge that you took away from the program?

“This pilot program gave me the opportunity to network with individuals in the firm, so that I could learn about the buildups and culture of JPMorgan. I was also very fortunate in having a very active mentor, Terrance Bowman, who gave me the necessary tools to succeed.”

What would you tell a fellow student about the experience?

“It was such a beneficial experience; not only did I manage to network and have many interview opportunities, but also I was able to grow personally. Looking back and speaking with my classmates who were also in the program, I’ve realized you’re only going to get out what you put in. This wasn’t a program where you gain experience or manage projects, but if you are persistent great things can happen.”

What is your favorite part about being a Hornet?

“I enjoyed the class size and the relationships that I was able to create with my classmates and professors.”

Alejandra Rodriguez

JPMorgan Chase and Co. Technology Mentor Program

Created in September 2013, the JPMorgan Chase and Co. Technology Mentor Program for DSU students (TMP) is designed to help students develop life skills for roles and future careers that complement their classroom learning at DSU.

Eight students from the College of Business majoring in Management Information Systems and the College of Mathematics, Natural Sciences and Technology majoring in Computer Science were the initial participants in the program, gaining experience in the scope of services offered by JPMorgan, and specific job requirements. Since the inception, three students have been offered full-time jobs after graduation.
Meet an intern | Neil P. Shah

Neil P. Shah, a junior Management — Finance and Banking major from Milford, Del., has participated in two of DSU’s internship programs.

Shah completed his first internship as a data analyst with Sallie Mae in August and interned as a strategic analyst with Barclaycard US during the spring 2014 semester.

Through these opportunities, he was able to strengthen his auditing skills, as well as gain experience forecasting supply and demand in the marketplace.

Also during the spring semester, Shah had the honor of participating in the NASDAQ OMX closing bell ceremony March 19 in New York City during a trip organized by Dr. Nandita Das, associate professor in the College of Business. He was accepted for the Major League Baseball Diversity Business Summit in April, where he had the opportunity to interview for a club summer internship.

On campus, Shah has been the president of the Investment Club, treasurer of the Student Advisor Council and a member of the Accounting and Finance Club. He has participated in the Black Executive Exchange Program and represented DSU at the Opportunity Funding Cooperation (OFC) Business Plan Competition and the National Diversity Case Study Competition (NDCCC). He has also been involved in community service by volunteering for Hornet Days, Open Houses and Parents Day.

After his December 2014 graduation, he plans to study for the first level Chartered Financial Analyst (CFA) exam and gain a few years’ work experience while pursuing CFA certification. Shah then hopes to obtain a Master of Business Administration in Finance/Marketing.

How did your internships help to prepare you for the future?

“In this global world, it is all about who you know. These internship opportunities have opened up many doors for me and have helped me with networking. They have also helped me to gain firsthand experience of the financial world and corporate world. Therefore, I consider them as getting my foot into the door.”

What is your favorite part about being a Hornet?

“My favorite part about being a Hornet is that since it is a small University compared to other universities, it is very easy to stand out if your academic and extracurricular activity record is good. It is just like how my advisor puts it — it is better to be a big fish in a small pond than to be a small fish in a big pond.”

Meet the intern | Daronte L. Baxter

Daronte L. Baxter, a junior Accounting major from Wilmington, Del., took part in a new opportunity with Wawa Inc. from June to January as the first DSU executive intern to CEO Chris Gheysens.

Through his internship, Baxter gained experience creating weekly reports that spanned a variety of key metrics. In addition, he was responsible for keeping Gheysens aware of the various changes in the industry and economic environment and climate, as well as completing special projects to help other analysts and project teams with their ventures.

A Dean’s List student, Baxter also works on campus as an academic tutor, assisting students with financial accounting, managerial accounting and cost accounting. He is a member of the Delaware State chapter of the National Society of Leadership and Success.

After his May 2015 graduation, he plans to enroll in a dual admission program to earn Master of Business Administration and Juris Doctorate degrees. His ultimate goal is to become a Certified Public Accountant specializing in forensic accounting.

What are the most important skills that you took away from your internship?

“During my time at Wawa Inc., I learned two very important things. The first of these was the importance of networking. I met many contacts who were willing to help me along my personal and professional journey. They allowed me insight into the company, and as a result I was able to affirm my career choices. Secondly, I learned the importance of being self-efficient and self-sufficient. When working in a business environment, it is important to be able to use your time efficiently so as to meet deadlines and exceed expectations.”

How did the internship help you to prepare for your future goals?

“In order to be a forensic accountant, it is imperative that I have knowledge of the accounting and business procedures of different industries. Working at Wawa, I was able to experience the processes they used firsthand. Furthermore, I was able to meet and talk with many Certified Public Accountants and other financial professionals, including Mr. Gheysens himself, whom advised me and shared their experiences with me. Being able to receive guidance from such a vast wealth of knowledge is priceless in itself.”

What is your favorite part about being a Hornet?

“My favorite part about being a Hornet is being able to be a part of an institution that is striving for greatness. Delaware State is positioning itself and its students to be able to achieve great things after they graduate college, and while they are still here. I am proud to be part of a University that not only prepares me for success, but pushes and challenges me to achieve it.”