

BSOS Alumni Career Profile: Accounting Analyst

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Cotter Rosenberg '17

Title: Accounting Analyst
Employer: John Staurulakis, Inc.
Major: Economics

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What do you enjoy most about your current position?

Every day I come to work I have an opportunity to learn new things by working on challenging projects. My coworkers tell me it's a three year learning curve. The Vice President says it's "job security." Ask me again in a year or two and I will have a different answer for you. What I think is most important is that JSI has created an environment where I am able to learn and thrive. Everyone is supportive, collegial, and helpful, and I feel like my employer treats me like a human being.

What is a typical day like?

I work in the Revenue Requirements Department. Rural telecommunications have a much higher cost to provide service than urban companies like Verizon and Comcast. Because of this, all telecommunications providers pay into a pool that the federal government uses to heavily subsidize the companies with high costs per customer, usually rural, so everyone in the United States can afford access to telecom services. The amount the federal government gives each company is based off of a given company's financials depending on what kind of services they provide, to how many customers etc.

My job is to analyze our client's financials, separate regulated revenues from non-regulated, allocate financials to proper accounts so the company can receive their full subsidy from the government. Eventually when I start to understand more about the process I will be able to become a consultant and advise our clients.

Which undergraduate experiences did you find most helpful in preparing you for your current position?

I am proud that I had a wide variety of UMD affiliated undergraduate volunteer and work experiences, all of which have played a vital role in giving me skills and experiences I've needed to get where I am today and accomplish what I have. It certainly wouldn't be the item on my resume that draws the most attention, but I would point to my work at the UMD Campus Bike Shop as the most consequential.

It is there where I learned skills that are often overlooked when resume building but end up being indispensable when networking, interviewing and ultimately excelling in the workplace: customer service, how to learn new skills, working with others, staying composed, communication, how to find meaning in your work and communicate that to others.

I dedicated myself to the Campus Bike Shop where I became passionate about the work, invested in its success, built a reputation for myself and worked closely with directors of the Adventure Program, RecWell and DOTS to make a lot of improvements. Many of my talking points when I was job searching revolved around the Campus Bike Shop.

How has your coursework helped you in your current position?

I don't think it comes as much of a surprise these days for students to hear that a lot of the content taught in class does not carry over into their post-undergraduate careers. Most of it is learned on the job and that seems to be the case at JSI. That's not to say that coursework has not helped. There are things that I've gained from the college experience that helped make me marketable and successful at work.

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Through my coursework, I learned how to...

- stay focused on a task;
- work in a team;
- stay committed to short term and long term goals;
- build relationships and respect others;
- learn;
- playing with MS Word, PowerPoint and Excel definitely helps as well!

Job/internship advice:

It has become incredibly easy to apply for jobs these days with the internet. A good 30 minutes catering your resume and cover letter and you're good to go. There were times I would apply to 5 or 6 jobs in a day. But because it is so easy to apply, HR teams have to sift through hundreds of resumes and cover letters to try to find a handful of candidates that they want to have a 30 minute interview with. Getting an interview is the hardest part. I heard back from maybe 10% of the jobs I applied to.

- Not hearing back from an employer doesn't mean your resume isn't impressive!
- Keep applying because if nothing else, it is good practice.
- For effective job searching there are two things that really work: connections and job fairs. Sure, employers are looking for impressive resumes but more importantly they are thinking "is this someone I will work well with?" "Will this person be good for our work environment?" So tap your network and show your smiling face.

Other advice for undergraduates to make the most of their time on campus:

Go to office hours. One of my biggest regrets about my undergraduate experience was not investing the time and energy to build relationships with my professors. There were a lot of reasons for that, such as I wasn't always as confident as I am today and I never really thought of myself as the best student. But you are paying a remarkably high price to be in college right now. The professors literally have to set aside time for their students to come visit them.

Save the first couple of weeks of the semester and a day or two before exams, I imagine many professors actually get bored with the lack of students showing up during office hours. Stop by maybe once or twice a month. Talk about the weather. You would be surprised how supportive and lenient many professors are when you meet them one on one. Their job is to help you succeed.