CAREER THE TURTLE
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Kenna Lemu '17

Title: Research Analyst
Employer: Maryland Center on Economic Policy
Major: Economics
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What do you enjoy most about your current position?
The opportunity to support a mission I really care about, and having an enormous network of people who support the same goals all over the nation. The organization I am a part of, the Maryland Center on Economic Policy, is dedicated to advancing policy ideas to foster broad prosperity and economic fairness within the state of Maryland. I have been engaged in public policy for a long time, and love the opportunity to support causes through my own work.

What is a typical day like?
While I work in a collaborative environment in which my team often works together on projects, much of my research is done independently. Typically, my days are spent gathering both federal and state data and performing fiscal and economic analysis of policies within the state of Maryland. I usually have several projects which I am working on at once, many of which are long-term. At times I reach out to state and national partners to advance fiscal and economic policy priorities and exchange information. Several times a month I publish blog posts on various policy topics. I also attend conferences and other meetings once or twice a week.

Which undergraduate experiences did you find most helpful in preparing you for this position?
I found that some of my most useful experiences were my internships, which helped me gain the experience to support the knowledge I had gained at the University of Maryland. I performed analysis work within both the Department of Interior and the Department of the Treasury, which gave me a solid foundation of research and analytical skills that I would go on to use in my current job, as well as a lot of knowledge on how the public sector operates. In addition, I was part of a research fellowship program launched by College of Behavioral and Social Sciences and Kaulkin Ginsberg, an M&A advisory firm. Within the fellowship, I collected and analyzed macroeconomic and qualitative data within select industries. My experience there taught me a lot about the private sector, and I improved my own teamwork and presentation skills working with the other fellows. Again, the skills I learned helped me improve upon my own analytical skills and gave me real-world knowledge of various industries.

How has your coursework helped you in your current position?
My classes in Statistics and Econometrics at the University gave me a solid foundation of quantitative skills that has been instrumental in helping me perform data analysis at my job. Many of my upper level economics courses such as "Economics of Regulation and Antitrust" and "Labor Markets" also gave me a better understanding of how to perform economic policy analysis, which is critical as my work deals with analyzing public policy.

Job/internship advice:
One of the most important skills for Economics majors that many students neglect is math and quantitative skills. While it's not required (at least not since I was there) I highly recommend taking econometrics or more advanced statistics courses, as it will give you knowledge applicable to many of the positions available for Economics majors.

Other advice: I'm sure you'll succeed! You're part of a great institution that has many resources for you to take advantage of in your job and internship search. Never be afraid to reach out and ask for help.

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