From classroom to practice: The SBOS Job & Internship Special Edition Newsletter

This Special Edition of the SBOS Newsletter is all about jobs and internships - whether you are a first-year student looking to use your new stats and research skills in a great summer internship position or if you are about to graduate and looking for your first job fresh out of graduate school, there is bound to be something of interest to you in this newsletter. We interviewed several SBOS students about the work they are doing with the help of the training they have received at SBOS. They also offer great advice about how to get the most out of your education at SBOS to secure your dream job. Read on to find out how you, too, can transfer your skills to the job of your dreams!

Hi everyone! My name is Nicole Porter, the Jobs Coordinator Emeritus for SBOS. I’d like to introduce you to Cristina who will be the new Jobs Coordinator this year. Cristina’s role is to establish relationships with different employers who offer job and/or internship opportunities that would be a great fit for our students. She also helps students who are about to graduate and alumni with their job search. She is a great resource for you when you begin to look for jobs and internships, and I encourage you to connect with her.

Hello everyone! My name is Cristina Tangonan, the new Jobs Coordinator for SBOS. I look forward to fostering relationships with employers and alumni to find job or internship opportunities that allow SBOS students to utilize the marketable skills that they have developed at CGU. I am always available to meet one-on-one with students to discuss resumes, cover letters, interview skills, and how to start a job search. The job and internship opportunities that have been posted in the past have allowed students to gain hands-on experience tackling some of society’s most pressing issues. I intend to continue that tradition by sharing inspiring and fulfilling work opportunities with the SBOS community and alumni network. I hope to someday assist you with your job search needs!

Learn about the work SBOS students are doing at:

Johnson & Johnson
Kaiser Permanente
Coca-Cola
Southern California Edison
Erasmus Universiteit Rotterdam
American Psychological Association
GAP
Los Angeles Superior Court

Applying the Science of Psychology and Evaluation Across the Globe
Erika Minnick Gains New Experiences at Gap

Erika Minnick is a 2nd year dual degree Master’s student in the Positive Organizational Behavior & Evaluation and Drucker MBA programs at CGU. She began her internship at Gap, Inc. as an MBA Human Resources Intern in June 2012 after finding the opportunity on indeed.com and networking with a colleague who works at the Old Navy headquarters.

Collaborating with Bill Ingham, Senior Director of CORE Human Resources in the San Francisco, California branch, Erika worked on a varied set of projects such as performance management, diversity and inclusion practices, and talent review processes — many tasks focusing on human resource projects and one special assignment in the area of loss prevention.

The loss prevention project involved creating a business case for check elimination at two of the Gap, Inc. brands in order to reduce check bad debt for the company. “It was a fantastic experience where I was able to get exposure to a multitude of functions and roles within the organization,” said Erika.

“My favorite part about working at Gap, Inc. was having the opportunity to connect with so many other employees in a variety of roles and functions, she continued. “I was able to gain a general understanding of the organizational culture and the company as a whole in a short amount of time due to the employees’ openness to helping me with my projects.” Erika has been able to apply many of her varied skills to her projects, from a positive organizational, evaluative, and business perspective all at once.

Not only was she able to translate her skills as an academic and researcher to an applied setting, she was able to gain new experiences she would not have if she had not taken this opportunity. “A great story from my internship occurred when I was working on the Loss Prevention Project,” admitted Erika. “An integral part of the project involved getting our team of MBAs familiarized with the world of loss prevention in the retail industry. In order to fully understand the scope of our project, we met with the Director of the Organized Retail Crime Unit for Gap, Inc.”

“We watched footage of multiple professional and amateur shoplifters and learned all of the advanced tactics thieves are using to steal tens of thousands of dollars in goods from stores. We were also able to see what fraudulent checks and bills looked like in person. It was really interesting to be able to see the raw footage and to speak with experts in the loss prevention domain. It also brought our project more meaning because it helped us understand how we were ultimately going to help the company reduce their levels of bad debt and benefit the organization as a whole.”
Marika Learns an Important Lesson at Coca-Cola

Marika Anastasiadou, a 2nd year Organizational Behavior and Evaluation Master's student began her internship as a Human Resources Associate at Coca-Cola Refreshments (CCR) in Atlanta, Georgia in summer 2012.

In this role Marika collaborated with two Organizational Effectiveness Directors where she evaluated the effectiveness of the new Performance Improvement Plan process at CCR. She was also in charge of creating an Organizational Effectiveness team site to be made available to the greater HR business partner community. In addition, she researched the best practices for pre-onboarding and presented her findings to a prominent HR workgroup.

“My favorite aspect of working at CCR was the ability to work on tangible, large projects that were entirely ‘our own’ to deliver. I wasn’t brought on to help answer emails and do administrative work. I worked on projects that had immediate and valuable impact and that were aligned with the organization’s 2020 vision,” reports Marika. She was glad that her managers didn’t micromanage her day to day. They were hands off, flexible, and trusting, providing her with the challenge to learn quickly and create her own network of resourceful colleagues.

Her education at CGU allowed her to complete varied tasks, such as writing thorough reviews of the literature and organizing office agendas in record time. “As researchers the literature review is fundamental to any endeavor we wish to undertake, so knowing how to do a good one quickly is imperative.”

One of her favorite moments was being able to do a meet-and-greet with Secretary of Health and Human Services, Kathleen Sebelius. “She took the time to greet each of the interns, learn a little something about our career goals, and I got a picture with her. It was a really good day and a glimpse into what my future looks like if I continue working in public health and health policy.”
Bob Ono Spends a Semester Studying in the Netherlands

Bob Ono, a 3rd year Positive Organizational Psychology PhD student, has been spending this Spring semester abroad as a visiting researcher at Erasmus University, Rotterdam in the Netherlands. Bob met Dr. Arnold Bakker at a conference for the Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology [SIOP] last year in San Diego, California.

At Erasmus University, Bob is involved in a wide spectrum of research activities, such as writing a chapter with Dr. Bakker on work-related flow, learning advanced statistical techniques to analyze daily and momentary data, and attending meetings at POP, Dr. Bakker’s Positive Organizational Psychology Lab. One of his favorite parts of working in this lab is the daily interaction with research professors and doctoral students who share similar research interests. He has also enjoyed observing the unique activity of the Dutch culture in Rotterdam, admitting that one of the most memorable moments was when he witnessed a Dutch police commander quell a riotous crowd during a soccer match.

“Through interviews and daily interactions, I got to learn distinct features of doctoral education in the Netherlands,” shares Bob. He also stresses that his training in statistics and positive psychology (theories on Flow, in particular) at SBOS has significantly aided in his studies at Erasmus. Though this position is not officially an internship, Bob has found himself developing a breadth of skills he will bring home with him and apply to his own scholarship when he returns.

He acknowledges that his stay in the Netherlands will enrich his academic career at CGU. “I am able to obtain extensive training in advanced statistical technique and relevant content areas of work engagement, flow at work, and well-being. I am also initiating and joining collaborative research projects on these topics, which will lead to submissions for publication.”

Graduate students at Erasmus are given the opportunity to take seminars and workshops to develop a specific scope of knowledge and skills rather than participate in formal coursework. Within these programs, researchers work toward completing four to five publications, many of which have been compiled to comprise much of their future dissertation projects. “Some doctoral students shared that this requirement can be challenging,” says Bob. “But (it) allows you to repeatedly learn the entire process of research publication, such as generating ideas, determining appropriate outlets, and understanding the revising process.”

Bob’s visit to the Netherlands has been rewarding both personally and professionally, and is eager to share his experience with others considering studying abroad. “I believe that a strong, ongoing relationship with Professor Bakker’s POP lab (will) open up future exchange and collaboration opportunities for other CGU students and professors interested in this field. I hope my trip contributes to the future advancement of the Positive Organizational Psychology program at CGU.”
Taylor Massey Applies Her Knowledge of Positive Organizational Psychology and Evaluation at Johnson & Johnson

Taylor Massey is a great example of why it pays to network at professional conferences. At a cocktail mixer during last year’s Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology (SIOP) Conference in San Diego, California, Taylor met Dr. Mike Benson, Director of Leadership Development at Johnson & Johnson. After chatting about similar interests, the next day Taylor found herself interviewing with Drs. Mike Benson and Sarah Brock (the Director of Assessment and Development) who would later become her supervisors in the following month.

As a 2nd year Master’s student in the Positive Organizational Psychology and Evaluation program, Taylor was able to apply her knowledge and academic scholarship as a Global Talent Management Intern at Johnson & Johnson in New Brunswick, New Jersey over the summer of 2012. Taylor worked on the “accelerate” side of talent management – connecting primarily with high potential employees. She was given several options upon her arrival with regard to the projects with which she could apply her academic background, and chose to work most extensively on the reorganization of the company’s executive coaching system. For this project Taylor developed step-by-step processes for the program, which included creating informative guides and tools for the Human Resources Department.

Among some of her achievements during her internship included developing an accredited coaching pool of external consultants, matching procedures for coaches and coachees, communicating expectations for the coaching engagement, establishing criteria for deciding who would most benefit from coaching, and creating evaluative methods upon completion of the coaching program. In addition, Taylor worked alongside the Director of Executive Coaching at PDI Ninth House to ensure the best practices of this program’s execution. As if that wasn’t enough, she also worked on a benchmarking project, interviewing several external firms on the topic of innovation to discover the best possible methods of integrating innovation into the culture of their personnel. “I absolutely loved working to develop leaders at the ground level,” says Taylor. “Using theory and research to create an evaluative and systematic coaching system that would be implemented globally was very fulfilling. Leadership development is my passion and working with high potential leaders only solidified that this was the career I was meant for.”

Working as a Global Talent Management Intern was not without its challenges. Taylor had to relocate to New Brunswick, New Jersey without knowing anyone. “Both of my bosses worked out of state and were only in the office a few days out of the month. I had never lived on the East Coast and had never worked for a multinational organization,” shared Taylor. But is apparent that she quickly found her way. “Upon my arrival I met many of the Johnson & Johnson employees and MBA interns. The culture at J&J was so relationship oriented that I never felt that I was on this journey alone. By the end of my internship I had created real friendships, a strong network, and a lasting mentoring relationship. This was certainly not something I expected to gain in addition to the tremendous learning and development in my profession.”

Taylor also reports that her internship experience enriched her academic career at SBOS. “Coming back this Fall was a new experience for me,” she describes. Though she admits that her first year was a challenge, her internship with Johnson & Johnson provided her with an opportunity to show off her skills and develop new ones. “I gained practical experience this summer and received very positive feedback on my work, allowing me to feel confident in my role as a student and think more critically about how to apply what I am learning in a practical setting.”
The Organizational Research department at Kaiser Permanente hires CGU alumni and students for positions ranging from Research Assistants to Project Managers. The Organizational Research department is an internal research resource that consults to and works collaboratively with managers and senior leadership across Kaiser Permanente (KP), designing research studies and providing information to help answer critical business questions. “It is an excellent place to work if you are interested in pursuing a career in applied research,” says Elizabeth Johnston, KP Research Consultant and SBOS alum. “It offers a unique opportunity to take what you have learned in your graduate studies and to apply and practice this in your daily work. You are able to see the direct impact of the research we conduct.” The department works on many large-scale, highly visible projects within the organization such as a nation-wide employee opinion survey, assessments of care provided to patients with chronic health conditions, an evaluation of a new physician on-boarding program, and a study to help identify organizational practices and factors that contribute to successful teams.

SBOS students are especially qualified for positions with KP’s Organizational Research department because they demonstrate a good understanding of research methods and design and have experience using SPSS and Excel to conduct statistical analyses and manage databases. They also value candidates with training in qualitative methods and individuals who are innovative in their approach to presenting information.

After gaining experience working at KP and learning about the organization, there are ample opportunities for internal movement. “Three of the Research Consultants in our department (including myself) graduated from CGU. Other members of our department have advanced to other areas within KP, for example, in areas such as Management Consulting, Performance Assessment, and Organization Development Consulting, or they work at one of our medical centers. Many have moved into consulting or administrative roles,” says Elizabeth.

As an organization, Kaiser strives to be a best place to work. They have been recognized as a national leader in health care and health information technology, and have received top ratings from outside agencies for performance on various quality and patient care measures. If you want to get involved with research at KP, you can visit their careers website at http://www.kaiserpermanentejobs.org. They can also contact the CGU Career Center to see if there are current job openings.

*editor’s note: the story above was reprinted from the 2011 Special Edition Job and Internship Newsletter

Sara Harris Explains Why It Pays To Read SBOS Newsletters

Sara Harris is a great example of why it’s a good idea to keep your eyes open and stay in touch with the SBOS newsletters. “I saw the job listing (at Kaiser Permanente) through the SBOS jobs and internship special edition newsletter,” says Sara. “I had just applied to the same job on Kaiser’s website, but applying through SBOS helped me get my foot in the door by getting my application directly to the hiring manager. Companies see so many resumes that having any sort of connection at all can be really helpful. Many of the people in my department graduated from CGU.”

Sara is a 3rd year PhD student in the Cognitive Psychology program at SBOS. She started working at Kaiser Permanente in May 2012. Working as a research associate in the Organizational Research Department in the branch in Pasadena, California, Sara researches everything relating to Kaiser Permanente’s workforce—ranging from employee satisfaction to patient safety. The majority of her projects, not surprisingly, focus on health-related outcomes, such as patient satisfaction with Kaiser’s health programs; other projects she assists with focus on organization behavior within the company, such as analyzing the results of annual surveys administered to Kaiser employees. Sara performs most aspects of the research process in this position, which often includes recruiting of participants, collecting data, conducting statistical analyses, and creating reports of her findings. She works with both qualitative and quantitative data, so the demands of her job varies quite a bit—she’s always learning something new.

Her favorite part about working at Kaiser? “The flexibility. My work fluctuates from day to day, and I love the variety of projects I get to work on. Sometimes I am performing higher-level analyses, while other times I’m creating conference presentations. The variability in my work really makes it easy to stay engaged.”
Stephen Miller Reports On His Internship From The Hill

“I think one of the most poignant moments for me thus far was when I attended the Senate Judiciary Committee hearing on gun control,” says Stephen Miller of his internship on Public Interest Policy in Washington, D.C. “On one side of the testimony table you had Gabby Giffords, the representative of Arizona who was shot in her district, pleading with Congress to be bold, and act on gun control legislation. On the other side of the table you had Wayne LaPierre from the NRA arguing that any new legislation was an infringement on individuals’ constitutional right to bear arms. It was amazing to me to see how the message was crafted by both sides to influence not only public opinion but also legislators’ willingness to act on such an important issue.”

A 4th year Social Psychology PhD candidate, Stephen is currently completing his internship in the Public Interest Government Relations Office of the American Psychological Association. This position is offered annually to two PhD students at the APA office in Washington, D.C. In this office, policy interns work with senior legislative assistants who serve as mentors, advising on a diverse range of portfolio items that center around specifically-defined, typically underrepresented populations.

Stephen’s research targeted a variety of underrepresented groups, including children, youth, and families; persons of low socioeconomic status; ethnic minorities; and persons with disabilities. “My position involved working in the main office doing research and composing fact sheets on issues related to specific populations, drafting policy recommendations, tracking legislation that the organization supports, and attending and reporting on Hill briefings and Senate hearings.”

Stephen’s skills shine in this position, allowing him to apply his SBOS education on a daily basis. “A great deal of what I do centers around researching issue areas and finding relevant psychological literature to back a position that APA is likely to endorse concerning upcoming legislation. My experience with conducting literature reviews, comprehending methods and findings, and then interpreting those findings for a non-technical audience are all skills that I gained while at CGU.”

Stephen says that his experience at APA has helped him develop and improve his applied scholarship at CGU. One of the main reasons he sought after this internship was to see how psychological research is applied to informing policy decisions toward the betterment of society. The Public Interest Government Relations Office encourages thorough research on a particular topic before it officially takes a position of legislative support or opposition.

The internship has also provided Stephen the opportunity to take advantage of networking opportunities he wouldn’t typically have had in a purely academic environment. In this applied context, he is able to apply his academic scholarship to an applied research setting – and see how his efforts translate to real legislative policy decision making.

“So far I have really enjoyed the interaction with my mentors who have a great deal of experience between them working on federal policy issues. Learning about the authorization and appropriations process during such a contentious budgetary climate has been a very valuable experience. Just learning about the different issue areas has been very eye-opening and an opportunity I most likely would not have had were it not for this internship.”

Applying the Science of Psychology and Evaluation Across the Globe
Kelly Murphy Puts Her Evaluation Skills To Work At The Edmund D. Edelman Children’s Court

When she’s not busy working on her research, 5th year Developmental Psychology PhD student Kelly Murphy spends her time as the principal investigator of an evaluation of the Geographic Distribution Program (also referred to as GEO) at the dependency court – an entity within the Edmund D. Edelman Children’s Court in Monterey Park, California. Kelly collaborates closely with Judge Margaret Henry, the presiding judge of the dependency court, Sacramento representative for the Administrative Office of the Courts, David Meyers, and Division Chief of Juvenile Court Services for the Department of Child and Family Services (DCFS), Wanda Harris.

Earlier in her academic career Kelly completed her Master’s thesis which focused on the influence of placement disruption on emancipated foster youth’s development. Shortly after, Kelly was recommended by her research advisor, Dr. Tiffany Berry, who believed she’d be a perfect fit for the position at the dependency court, given her experience conducting large-scale evaluation projects and her passion for promoting positive youth development among those in the child welfare system. Not surprisingly, Kelly did not disappoint.

When Kelly first arrived she discovered that the presiding judge of the dependency court was interested in evaluating the impact of the Geographic Distribution Program – a new method of assigning dependency cases to judges.

California has the largest child welfare population in the U.S., with over 64,000 children currently living in out-of-home placements. Los Angeles County is home to one-third (over 20,000 children) of California’s child welfare population alone. The dependency court at the Edmund D. Edelman Children’s court oversees all of these cases. A primary goal of the GEO program is to assign each courtroom to a DCFS office so judicial officers could make their expectations clear, social workers can get to know their attorneys, and judicial officers could learn about the resources and challenges families face in their region.

Kelly collaborated with other researchers at the dependency court to complete the first two phases of evaluation, assessing the proportion of GEO assigned cases in each courtroom and understand dependency professionals’ perceptions of collaboration – and if the GEO program was effective in promoting collaboration.

Working as an evaluator in the dependency court is not an easy task. “To assess the proportion of cases GEO assigned we had to code over 500 case files--actual files not electronic copies. Then during the second phase of the evaluation we had to schedule and conduct 5 separate focus groups, one with each type of dependency professional (social workers, judicial officers, parent lawyers, child lawyers, county counsel, and court officers). After completing those two phases we presented our findings at a summit for LA dependency professionals that had over 200 people in attendance. The third phase, which I’m in the middle of developing, is looking at the influence of the GEO program on case outcomes.”

Though a challenging position, Kelly finds her work rewarding. “My favorite part of the experience was holding the focus groups. You hear a lot of rumors about how bad the child welfare system is and there are always news stories on how the child welfare system failing our children. It was nice to see how passionate and hardworking everyone was,” shares Kelly. “To make sure the focus groups ended on a positive note I asked everyone to share their most proud moment of their job. Everyone told such heart wrenching, beautiful stories that at the end of each focus group everyone had tears in their eyes.”

Kelly also states that the application of her evaluation skills is an extremely worthwhile endeavor. “Everyone is so eager to participate in the evaluation – they really want to help make the dependency process better. For example, in more than one focus group we had people with typed up notes because they wanted to make sure they didn’t forget to mention anything. We even had people who informally surveyed their co-workers to get their opinion on collaboration and GEO. It was just a really cool thing to see.”

Not only has this position allowed Kelly to develop and expand her own evaluation skills she gained at SBOS, it has also had a tangible impact on the people around her. “After we finished presenting our findings at the summit meeting the presiding judge of the dependency court emailed me and said that after our presentation she noticed an increased awareness of, and enthusiasm for, geographic relationships’...It was just great being able to apply what I learned at CGU to help what I think is a really important issue”.

Applying the Science of Psychology and Evaluation Across the Globe
SBOS Alum Talks About the Value of SBOS Students’ Analytical Skills for Employment

Several SBOS students and alumni have been fortunate enough to work with Southern California Edison (SCE), the largest subsidiary of Edison International and the primary electricity supply company for much of Southern California, in many different capacities throughout the past several years utilizing their many skills learned through coursework and projects at SBOS.

What do SBOS interns do at Southern California? As described by Carlos Puertas, Manager of Learning Analytics in the Transmission and Distribution Business Unit and SBOS alum, “the nature of the work typically ranges anywhere from data analysis to program evaluation to developing leadership development programs from scratch. The work mostly consists of working very closely with a project manager to support an existing program or project. Because SBOS interns have great analytical skills, we rely on them to provide statistical advice, high-level data analysis, and report generation. In addition, the SBOS interns bring a wealth of knowledge when it comes to evaluation and putting together presentations for Senior Managers.”

When filling intern positions, Southern California Edison looks for SBOS students who have skills with data analysis and project management as well as high written and verbal communication skills. “Since we work with a number of different internal clients, we often rely on [SBOS interns] to help prepare presentations, reports, and communication plans,” adds Puertas.

“Southern California Edison is a great place for SBOS interns because of the wide range of exposure to different projects,” says Puertas. “From the start of their internship, they are put on 1 - 2 projects, often times with a great deal of responsibility. We even sometime rely on them to manage a project from start to finish during their tenure. Since Edison is such a large company, there are many opportunities for them to gain exposure to different groups within the company and possibly land a full-time job.”

How can you get involved? Southern California Edison has a formal intern program sponsored by their Human Resources department through which several SBOS students have gained experience. The internship program is open to both summer and year-round interns at the undergraduate and graduate level. There are also opportunities for SBOS students to be contract workers on an as needed basis, which is outside of the formal Edison internship program. Visit the internship program website at is http://www.edison.com/careers/college.asp or contact the SBOS Jobs Coordinator, (jobs.coordinator@cgu.edu), for more information.

*editor’s note: the story above was reprinted from the 2011 Special Edition Job and Internship Newsletter

Marcy Willis Tells All About Being A Program Analyst at SoCal Edison

Marcy Willis is an SBOS alumna in the Organizational Behavior & Evaluation Master’s program (2012) who heard about her current position, a Program Analyst at Southern California Edison through the Job and Internship Newsletter. Collaborating with the Learning Analytics team in HR, Leadership, Learning, and Organizational Development, Marcy evaluates new technical training programs with safety implications. Through this position, she has had the opportunity to work with a very diverse group of clients and professionals from the field.

Marcy’s evaluation projects have real implications for real people. “Last year, the team I am on conducted an impact analysis and based on that analysis, linemen—who perform dangerous work and get seriously injured more than any other job classification at Edison—were able to get 3 days of refresher skills training this year.” As a result of her hard work and evaluative skills, this marked the first time in the history of Edison (over 160 years!) that linemen have had refresher training. “It is deeply meaningful work,” says Marcy. “I love being an internal evaluator and getting to see the impact. Major decisions actually get made based on results!”

Marcy reports leaving CGU with very strong research and evaluation skills that can be applied to many different areas of industry. She has learned how to learn and not to be afraid: to gather information and dive right in.” I didn’t know about evaluating ‘training’ per se, but I went to the CGU library and checked out stacks of books and made myself something of an expert. I still have a lot more practical experience to acquire, but I’ve been getting that experience at Edison with a phenomenal team.”

She offers encouraging words about applying her graduate education to her professional work. “I wasn’t always happy going through the program, but now that I’m out of it, I do appreciate the skillset that I have and I definitely did not have it before. It has opened up a world of possibilities and work that is meaningful and fun. I have fun at work!”
Yuliya Beleva, a 5th year PhD student in Social Psychology, began her internship with NBC’s Consumer and Market Intelligence Department, and later at the NBC International TV Distribution Department, in 2010. She met the NBC Human Resources representative at a career fair hosted by CGU, but also met with several NBC executives for informational interviews before she landed the internship.

As an intern at the NBC Universal building in Universal City, California, Yuliya was commissioned with many responsibilities, including tracking Nielsen ratings, analyzing qualitative research and focus groups, and assisting during segmentation studies. At the second department where she interned, International TV Distribution, she was responsible for preparing monthly and annual reports on international TV viewership data and maintaining the department’s program database. But that was not the end of the entertainment research career for her.

A year after her internships ended, Yuliya received a call from her former co-workers at NBC and was offered a full-time position at the Consumer and Market Intelligence Department. Now, together with her team, she is responsible for the primary research of NBC’s primetime scripted and unscripted programs such as The Voice, Revolution, The Office, Law & Order, and 30Rock to name a few. She also tests various promotional materials like TV promos and print ads, and conducts in-depth audience research like segmentation and longitudinal tracking of program awareness and intent. In this position, one of her objectives is to examine attitudes, intentions and behaviors of adult viewers nationwide.

Yuliya has been able to apply quite a lot of her rigorous research methodology and statistical analysis education at SBOS in her work at NBC. “Social media research is the biggest trend right now (used as a) tool to gauge attitudes toward programs and personalities on the air,” she describes. “I am the ‘data person’ in my department, so my job consists of analyzing the data for all studies that my department conducts. This includes programming surveys, processing the data, and creating data reports for each test. One of my biggest projects is to develop and test a predictive model to predict TV ratings using 10 years of data which NBC has collected.”

Working in an applied setting is a challenge for any person planning to explore a non-academic position, but Yuliya has thrived. Furthermore, her experience at NBC exemplifies how internships such as this one have a reciprocal effect of enriching one’s academic career. “Applied work has helped me see the value of applied research, and see how different it is from basic academic research,” shares Yuliya. “Not better or worse, just different. I found that nothing can substitute the experience you gain when doing applied work – all unexpected situations, all unpredictable obstacles. A good example is the urgency of data collection and data analysis when real-time decisions rely on it. This has put my role as a PhD candidate into a more realistic perspective.”

For Yuliya, working at NBC has been very rewarding. “My favorite part is seeing my work being applied in real life – and right away – to inform decision-making at high levels. I love the fast pace of doing research and not having to wait for months to see results... but this also makes the job very demanding. I also like the atmosphere in my department. The team feels very much like a family; instead of competition, everybody knows their role and works as a team helping each other.”

Her education at SBOS has prepared her for this demanding position, and she has been able to apply her knowledge and skills gained from her education. “At my job at NBC I often use the methodology and data analysis skills I learned at CGU: survey development (thanks Dr. Siegel!), SPSS, (thanks Dr. Berger!), and secondary data analysis (thanks Dr. Crano!). I have realized that this is the best foundation you can have for any research job, in any research field. If that foundation is solid, the rest is easily applied.”
Positve Psychology and Evaluation Master’s Alumnus Wes Posson Shares How To Search For A Job

Searching for a job is tough. Being in graduate school we are all naturally competitive individuals, to one extent or another. We all want to get “the best” job that we can when we graduate. Some of us have a “dream job” that we want to have. Some of us don’t know what we want to do yet; we just know that we want a job we enjoy. Regardless of what your career aspirations are, we all have to start at the bottom of the career ladder. Below are some of the strategies I used to get my foot on the first rung of that ladder.

The first thing you have to do is figure out what kind of a job you want when you graduate, which is easier said than done. I was fortunate enough to stumble upon a job in CGU’s Institutional Research during my first semester here at CGU. After less than a year there I knew that this was something that I wanted to do, and could do, as a career. Some may not be as fortunate as I was. If you don’t know what you want to do post graduation, internships are a great way to get a little taste of different jobs. (*editor’s note: If you are having trouble finding openings, the SBOS Jobs Coordinator has binders full of job and internship opportunities.)

Once you know what kind of job you want after you graduate, the next step is to set yourself up for success. I knew that the job I was looking for was very specific, almost niche. In order to set myself apart from the crowd I had to have everything employers were looking for in a job posting. To learn what skills I needed to have to make me a qualified candidate I started looking at job postings nearly a year before I began to actually search for a job. By looking at tons of job postings I learned what kind of experience employers most often looked for. I then used this to craft my education and current job positions to emphasize the skills I knew employers were looking for.

Before I even did that though, I ran into a large problem. I didn’t know where to look for job postings. Searching on general job search websites like Monster.com wasn’t going to get me anywhere. I needed to know what websites were specific to careers in higher education. The easiest way to do this was to talk with people in the field; in my case, I spoke with my supervisors. They were incredibly helpful in showing me what listservs to sign up for and what websites to look at for job postings. They were also very supportive in terms of sending me job postings that they thought I might be interested in.

Let’s fast-forward to the point where I was ready to begin my job search in earnest. Since I had been looking at job postings for several months, the only thing I had to change was that now when I saw a posting that seemed like a good fit, I would actually apply. After seeing the posting, I would always go to the company’s website to the original source and apply there. I am a big believer in quality over quantity. I didn’t send out hundreds of applications. I spent my time looking for job postings that seemed like a good match for me, and then I would spend some time researching the company before I even applied. I wrote individualized cover letters for each posting (no templates!) emphasizing points that they had posted in the job posting. I tweaked my resume for each job posting, again to emphasize the points in the job posting. My aim was to set my application apart from the dozens (hundreds?) of other applications through quality.

This strategy paid off for me. I probably got 1-2 follow-ups for every half dozen or so applications I sent out. This was awesome, but now I had to figure out how to nail the always-tricky phone interview. Back to what we are all good at: more research! Learn as much as you can about the company and the person interviewing you. I spent hours on company websites learning about what the company’s mission was and what their needs were. I searched for my interviewers on LinkedIn, Facebook, and Twitter. I tried to find any scrap of information I could to make a connection (caveat: don’t make it obvious that you found this person on Facebook, that’s just creepy). When you find something interesting on the company’s website, see if you can find out more about it on Google. I spent a lot of time looking for news articles about the company’s to learn more about what other’s thought of their policies. In the end, these steps gave me a lot of material to talk about and ask questions about.

So at this stage I know what my talking points are for the phone interview, I know what subtle little tidbits to drop to make a connection with my interviewer, and I know about the company I am interviewing with. One of the hardest things to do, but something I think is necessary to make a good connection over the phone, is to be human. When I interview on the phone, I always try to work in something that shows who I am. I try to make people laugh at “industry standard” jokes. For example,  when asked to describe a project I worked on I would typically say something along the lines of how my main goal for the project was to make a lot of numbers look pretty enough for someone to look at without their brain melting. From there I would go into a more serious account of exactly what I did, but first I showed that I had a personality and wasn’t just a voice on the phone and I was able to get my point across.

One of my favorite parts of the interview is when you are asked “do you have any questions for me?” Remember all that time you spent poking around the company’s website and pouring through news articles about the company? This is the time when all that pays off. Ask about how some new initiative the company has effects the position you are interviewing for or ask about the results of a white paper that you found published on some website.

From there, I would repeat these steps for any follow-up interview that you may have. Although I am still working to secure a job after graduation, I feel confident in my method. The job market is tough, but we all have the ability to set ourselves apart from the pack, it just takes a little bit of effort.

*Update by the editor: Wes has recently been offered and has accepted a full-time position as Institutional Research Analyst at New York University in the Office of Institutional Research. He plans to begin his new position a month after he graduates in May.
SBOS Students and Alumni
Get Real: How Do I Land That
Job or Internship?

"Be very proactive and meet as many people as possible."

"Use CGU’s resources and networks to your advantage. I learned a lot by meeting with the jobs coordinator to work on my resume and job-hunting skills. You can also meet with the CGU career office and practice your interviewing skills. You will probably be more likely to find a job through CGU’s network than by applying for a position through a large internet search."

"Go to all the conferences that you can and make use of travel awards."

"One reason why I was hired was because my managers knew the quality of education that SBOS provides. Use this to your advantage to market yourself and be open-minded to positions you might think are not exactly what you want to do—you could be surprised!"

"It's a good idea to get on an organization’s radar (via a referred contact) as early as possible so you can be informed of upcoming opportunities."

"Be persistent! I started applying for summer internships in early November and kept with it until I was hired in mid-March. Often times you don’t hear back from companies you applied to at all. Just try to maintain a good attitude and stay motivated."

"Networking is a great way to find out about jobs and internships. I came to realize very quickly that jobs and internships are given to people that have an “in” with the company."

"Go to the Career Center to make sure your resume is sharp and that you know how to write a solid cover letter."

"Networking is the easiest way to get a job so reach out to family and friends. Ask CGU to have more career fairs and try to get more businesses to come to us."

"It helps to talk to professors and alumni who are tied into organizations that offer internships to current graduate students."

"Go to informational interviews as much as you can. The days of sending resumes online are over, so if you want a good job, you need to network. If you are shy, force yourself to learn some networking skills and put yourself out there!"

"An internship is a great way to put your foot in the door and meet the right people."

"Don’t be afraid to be realistic—if you want a job in applied research, and even if you are going for a teaching position, realize early that it’s tough out there. You will need to do your time ‘in the trenches.’"

"Get involved! Really there’s not much else to say."

"I’m sensitive about how much work we have and how little time we have but it’s just so important to intern and get a job at an organization outside of CGU. Plus the connections and relationships you make will be invaluable for your future careers."

"Think in advance what kind of experience you want to have and the prerequisite skills you need to be competitive for those types of internship opportunities."

"Try to get an internship early on during your time at CGU."

"Don’t be afraid to get a job/internship by leveraging your connections."

"Be you. I brought my true self to the table...at the end of the day, organization-person fit plays a huge role in your own job satisfaction."

"Meet with the SBOS Jobs Coordinator (current and emeritus) for advice and ideas. They’re here to help you!"

Now go get ‘em!