

Students get a sneak peek at careers related to STEM



Three students affirm GPS's emphasis on quantitative methods positioned them for success in internships related to STEM, plus granted them confidence to pursue careers in the sector

By Sarah Pfladderer | GPS News

As more than 90 percent of students at the UC San Diego School of Global Policy and Strategy (GPS) complete internships between their first and second year at the School, the positions they land may vary as widely as their dispersion about the globe.

And when this year's cohort returns to campus in the fall with a newly minted confidence that skills from the classroom are applicable in the real world, a handful of students also will have confirmation their education is more versatile than meets the eye—versatile enough to pursue a career in the sector of STEM.

Here, we connect with three of these students to see how GPS prepared them for positions at STEM-centric companies that span from the outskirts of Silicon Valley and to our home base and hub for all things biotech.

Delving into data daily



Julie Kim, 2017 MIA candidate, is narrowing in on numbers this summer as a quantitative marketing analyst intern at RingCentral in San Francisco, a provider of cloud-based phone systems for businesses.

Her primary project requires gathering relevant data from the company database, cleaning the data and creating different statistical models to evaluate asset attribution and content performance. This also entails some communication with developers, data scientists and engineers.

“I’ve learned it is very important to be able to tell clear and meaningful stories out of numbers to people who are not familiar with metrics or statistics,” Kim explained. “When I finish tailoring my models, I am going to give a presentation to senior-level managers and directors.”

The School’s commitment to training in Excel, STATA and other programs readied Kim for the internship, she said. Kim also noted that on her first day, she had the assurance and qualifications to head up her daily tasks.

Considering her aspirations after graduation, the position has proven a perfect fit.

“I hope to pursue a career as a data analyst or a data scientist in an international tech company,” she said.

Taking on international trade at Tesla

As an intern on the global trade compliance team at Tesla Motors in San Francisco, Kevin Birmingham, 2017 MIA candidate, is dabbling in what led him to

GPS to begin with—an interest in international trade and business.

Birmingham is responsible for ensuring all international shipments comply with regulations that govern international trade. This grants him exceptional access to foreign trade agreements, foreign trade zones, classification of goods according to Harmonized Tariff Schedule and other aspects of trade compliance.

“The sheer difficulty of the coursework at GPS and the breadth of courses we take has made me feel confident handling tasks that are unfamiliar and outside of my comfort zone,” he said. “Also, having a working knowledge of trade agreements was helpful, as well as some of the technical skills I learned like using Excel have come in handy.”

Birmingham added, he has an eye toward taking more STEM-focused courses as they relate to energy and data analytics in his second year.

“It’s great working in a fast-growing sector that’s focused on accelerating the transition to more sustainable means of transport and energy usage,” he concluded. “I hope that after graduation I can continue to work at a company that uses STEM principles to move the world forward.”



Developing an eye for e-sales, e-commerce

Though Xiao Sun, 2017 MIA candidate, has directed much of her attention to Amazon and eBay this summer, she’s not online shopping.

Sun is an intern on the e-sales and e-marketing team at Torrey Hills Technologies, a San Diego-based manufacturer and distributor of materials such as three roll mills, heat sinks and other pure metals and high density alloys, with shipping to more than 30 countries.

Working in e-sales and e-marketing, Sun has had a hand in growing Torrey Hills Technologies’ presence on Amazon and eBay, including through analyzing data

from its past performances on the websites.

And, thanks to three quarters of quantitative method training at GPS, she's thrived seamlessly in her role—one which she landed through a direct introduction to CEO Ken Kuang, facilitated by GPS Career Services Director David Robertson.

With gratitude, Sun said, "David helped me a lot in finding an internship."

The experience thus far, Sun said, has her looking forward to learning more about negotiations and management at GPS in the coming year and pinning down her career aspirations

"I want to continue doing marketing and sales, especially in the transnational companies," she said.