JACOB SNYDER - WELL ROUNDED AND READY TO PURSUE ANY CAREER PATH

UNI’s Mathematics Department has a rich history in mathematics education as well as a nationally acclaimed program in actuarial science. Actuarial science applies mathematical and statistical methods to assess risk in insurance, finance, and other industries and professions. Jacob Snyder, a Junior, is an Actuarial Science and Finance major. Jacob always had an interest and aptitude for math when he was young. He knew that his future career would have something to do with math. What he didn’t know was that actuarial science would become the perfect combination he was looking for. The inclusion of analytical and communications skills in this degree was the perfect choice for his career aspirations.

Jacob chose UNI for two main reasons, “the first reason was its size. It is small enough to get the personal attention that I wanted, but big enough to have the resources and recognition of a larger university. This is very important for my desired career choice. The close relationship I have with my professors allows me to acquire the academic and career planning help that I need and the size of the university brings in well-known companies looking for students to fill their internship and full time positions. The other reason was its established music program.”

Jacob’s favorite major course has been Actuarial Math, which is a course preparing students to take the Models of Life Contingencies (MLC) actuarial exam. “I took this course in the fall of 2014, which was after my first summer internship at Transamerica in Cedar Rapids. Transamerica predominately sells life insurance, so I learned about the intricacies of life insurance during that summer. Exam MLC is about the math behind basic life insurance policies. It was interesting to apply what I learned at Transamerica to the course and it allowed me to obtain a more well-rounded knowledge of life insurance.”

In his free time Jacob is heavily involved in the UNI School of Music as a French horn player. “I have been involved in the Panther Marching Band, symphonic band, horn lessons, horn choir/studio, and most recently the wind symphony which is the top auditioned ensemble at UNI. I have been involved in music most of my life, so this is just an extension of that. I have a passion for music and through my involvement I have learned so many life and career skills that will help me in my profession. These skills range from dedication, perseverance, time management, communication, to teamwork.”

In the future Jacob plans on working as an actuary at an insurance company after his internships with insurance companies. “I had a life insurance internship at Transamerica last summer (2014) and this coming summer (2015), I have another life insurance internship lined up at Allianz in Minneapolis, MN. I really enjoyed my time at Transamerica which is what prompted my search for another life insurance internship.”

His advice to a future STEM panther is, “It is true that there is a high needed for STEM employees, so choosing a STEM major, especially at UNI, will put you at an advantage when you are looking to find employment after graduation. I can only speak for mathematics, but a math degree at UNI gives you the skills you need to excel in whatever math related career you want to pursue and UNI helps you find experiences that will get you there. The actuarial science club brings in ten or more employers per year that are hiring for internships. It is through these meetings that I acquired my first internship at Transamerica. Take advantage of these experiences and also chances to better your communication skills. By becoming a well-rounded student and future employee, you have the ability to pursue any career path you want.”

Story by Stefani Keller, UNI STEM Program Associate, Communications