

An international student perspective: The internship journey of two Oshkosh students

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For any student, finding an internship can be intimidating.

For Mayur “Mo” Ranpara and Nilesh Gohil, the internship process was even more challenging. International students and longtime childhood friends from Nairobi, Kenya, Ranpara and Gohil were nervous to start their internship process because they had fears that their international status would put them at a disadvantage over other students.

When Ranpara finished high school, he became a full-time internal auditor for a bank in Kenya. Although he had a good job, he felt he needed to take on more responsibility, and furthering his education was how he was going to accomplish that. Ranpara followed his childhood friend Gohil to UW Oshkosh where at the May 11 Commencement ceremony he is being recognized with a Chancellor's Award for Excellence.

“After researching schools, I chose UW Oshkosh because of its well-recognized and successful [College of Business](#),” Gohil said.

Ranpara and Gohil’s families were nervous for them to make the transition to America, but both families also knew the importance of a college degree. It took Ranpara three months to convince his parents to let him come to America.

“It was at that time my parents saw the drive and passion in me,” Ranpara said.

Ranpara and Gohil are accounting and finance double majors, and when they began their internship search, they had mixed feelings. While Gohil’s belief in working hard toward his goals gave him the confidence he needed to find an internship, Ranpara was a bit more nervous. Ranpara feared that being an international student would put him at a disadvantage, as some employers tend use internships as a strategy for long-term employment and may not want to deal with international employment issues. He was also afraid that he didn’t know much about American business culture.

Both students began their internships search as sophomores and utilized many campus resources.

“It’s never too early to start looking for internships...the earlier the better,” Gohil said.

Ranpara and Gohil utilized Titan Jobs in their job search, as well as Career Services to help with writing cover letters and résumés. They also sought assistance from Jessie Pondell, College of Business Internship Director. Pondell helped the students focus on networking with as many employers as possible, promoting their international insight as a value-added strength to potential employers.

Ranpara and Gohil were both profoundly successful in their internship search. Ranpara has held internships at three different companies, and is currently an intern at Bemis Company Inc. as an IT Financial Intern. He has accepted a full-time position at Bemis as an IT Financial Analyst upon his graduation from UW Oshkosh on May 11.

“Having an internship not only helped me reach my goals, but at times exceed them,” Ranpara said.

Gohil found his internship with Jewelers Mutual Insurance Company and spent two years as an intern there.

“Getting an internship helped me grow personally and professionally. The relationships I built over the years with my co-workers have strengthened my professional network,” Gohil said.

Gohil accepted a position with PricewaterhouseCoopers after he graduated in fall 2012.

Their advice for an international student, or any other student, looking for an internship is to use every available resource UW Oshkosh has to offer.

Gohil stresses using Career Services, Titan Jobs, LinkedIn and networking with professionals, as well as using one’s international status as an advantage because of the diverse background that it can bring to a company. Ranpara emphasizes the fact that everyone’s situation is different and that individuals should capitalize on the individual strengths they can bring to an employer. Both students believe in not giving up on the search because there are so many people willing to help.

This story was written and submitted by Maggie Nett on behalf of the UW Oshkosh College of Business. Faculty, staff and students are encouraged to contribute calendar items, campus announcements and other good news to UW Oshkosh Today.

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