

Announcements

Academy Training Paves Way to Success

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For most students, having one internship in their academic career is enough. But **Lauren Pryor** (Audit associate, Orlando) decided early on that she wanted more. As a finance major in a National Academy Foundation (NAF) program, she was required to work as an intern between her junior and senior years of high school. But she decided to jump-start the process, snagging an internship a full year ahead of time. "That was the best part of the program," Lauren says. "I was able to gain some insight into what it's like to go to work every day at a professional-services firm." Lauren enjoyed her first internship so much that she kept going, working summer internships through college at the University of Richmond.

As an 8th-grader, Lauren hadn't planned on pursuing a career working with numbers. It was an open house for her high school's NAF program that brought her to a decision. "I was very impressed by the instructors, and I thought that, no matter what career I chose, having a background in financial literacy would be important," she recalls. Soon she was picking out a wardrobe for "Professional-Dress Mondays," and taking "Intro to Accounting." "Probably the most important thing I learned at NAF was teamwork," Lauren says. "We all realized we had to carry our own weight, but at the same time, we learned that we could rely on other people."



Lauren Pryor

Professionals Help Students Grow

NAF, founded in 1982 by Citigroup Chairman Emeritus Sanford Weill, has grown to 500 academies and serves more than 50,000 students across 41 states, D.C, and the U.S. Virgin Islands each year. In July 2010, through funding from the KPMG Foundation, KPMG teamed with NAF to strengthen high school accounting education at its Academies of Finance (AOF) nationwide.

Through this collaboration, KPMG assists NAF with its accounting curriculum, and guides and supports NAF's accounting course sequence to ensure industry relevance. To achieve this objective, the firm engaged accounting professors who are alumni of [The PhD Project](#) (the diversity program founded by the KPMG Foundation) as part of those efforts, which also include providing professional development guidance to teachers who will implement the curriculum.

"Our support of NAF aligns with our larger strategy around diversity and corporate responsibility, providing us with a unique opportunity to reach high-school students who have an interest in finance," says **Kathy Hannan**, national managing partner, Diversity and Corporate Responsibility. "Working with students in their pre-college years and providing them with access to advanced curricula makes them more workforce-ready and able to become successful, productive members of the companies they ultimately join."

Teaming with NAF also supports the firm's efforts to engage our partners and employees in meaningful, skills-based volunteer opportunities, adds Kathy. "They're able to share their knowledge with students through work-based learning experiences that include job shadowing, mock interviews, guest-speaking opportunities, and resume/portfolio reviews. These experiences benefit our volunteers as well as the students."

That one-on-one interaction with professionals in the field is what impressed Lauren the most as she progressed through her Academy years. "Hearing professionals in the field talk about technical topics, or even things like business etiquette and possible career paths, really made an impact on me," she says.

KPMG impressed her, too, when she attended an accounting career fair and met some of our professionals. She interned at the Orlando office, eventually landing a job in that office's Audit practice.

What does the future hold for Lauren? She's not sure at this point, but it certainly looks bright. Since graduating from the University of Richmond in 2009, Lauren earned her Master's degree in Accounting at the University of Central Florida, and went on to pass the CPA exam last year. In mid-October, she'll be a full-fledged CPA, with lots of potential. "I'm taking it day by day," Lauren says. "But I can't believe how much I've learned in just my first year at KPMG."

Approved By Bruce Pfau