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Alumni Profile

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Internship aids career path

Matt Vance '99 firmly believes in the value of internships. Vance is a partner in the Lake Oswego investment banking and wealth advisory firm where he began working 11 years ago as an intern.

Veritas Private Advisors offers two internships annually, one to a college junior and one to a senior, usually Linfield students.

Four Linfield interns besides Vance have become Veritas employees, including Corinn (Rone) Parks '03, who now coordinates its internship program. The others are Stephanie (Mathie) Bergh '04, Arianne Freuler '08 and Rachael Rahn '09, who will serve as an intern her senior year and start full-time in fall 2009. Then, five of the firm's 20 employees will be Linfield alumni.

Veritas helps business owners and families manage their financial assets. Vance, one of its four partners, is a Certified Public Accountant, a Certified Financial Planner™ and a Certified Merger and Acquisition Advisor.

He spends about half his time on investment banking and half on wealth advising, offering related services through KMS Financial Services Inc.

Interns work during tax season, February through April, when the load is heaviest. These are definitely not coffee-fetching and photocopying internships.

"It is 90 percent work for our tax consulting and compliance practice," Vance says. "They do almost anything a first-year staff member would do."

Vance understands the demands of balancing this work with classes. He was a tax intern at Veritas and also had an investment advisory internship with another firm during his junior and senior years at Linfield. He joined Veritas full time after receiving a degree in accounting.

Michael Jones, the Harold Elkinton Professor of Accounting, taught Vance and takes some credit for luring him into accounting. He says Vance had a natural ability and from the beginning asked "Why?" questions because he'd figured out the "how."

"He went through there (Veritas) like a rocket, straight to the top," Jones says. "He could teach me a few things now. He's so intelligent."

Jones helps Veritas, as well as other firms, recruit interns.

"Veritas recruits at other local universities," Vance says. "However, we find that the mix of skills and the quality of talent we see from Linfield is much higher. We like the well-rounded nature of the students, including their writing and communication abilities as well as

their ability to interact confidently with clients and accept a great deal of responsibility early in their careers."

By the time they join Veritas, recruits have had almost six months of experience with the firm, Vance says. "It's a benefit for them and for us. We (the partners) need face time with them, and they really know what they're getting into here. It tends to work out well."

Vance says internships help students in specific majors such as accounting and finance, to build networks while honing skills. "For marketing and management, which are a bit more wide open, internships help differentiate one from the crowd as well as providing real-world experience," he says.

Vance serves on the Business Advisory Council, which advises the department faculty and seeks to increase internships for Linfield business students as well as philanthropic support for the program.

For relaxation, he escapes to his family's Idaho ranch, where he enjoys hunting and fishing. He and his wife, Kate (Lamont) '99, have a 3-year-old daughter, Lauren, and a 1-year-old son, Owen.

— Beth Rogers Thompson



Matt Vance '99, Stephanie (Mathie) Bergh '04 and Corinn (Rone) Parks '03 all got their start as interns at Veritas Private Advisors. Now, Vance is a partner in the firm, Parks coordinates the internship program, and Bergh also works there full time.