



Bentley–Loomis Sayles Partnership Prepares Women for Careers in Investment Management

By Sean Kerrigan — December 10, 2018



Kristy Hergueter '10, an associate product manager at Loomis Sayles, with mentee Daniella Jakobson '20

A partnership between Bentley University and Loomis, Sayles & Company aims to diversify the talent pool for investment managers. The Loomis Sayles Undergraduate Women's Investment Network introduces female sophomores and juniors to the field of investment management through mentoring, workshops and internships at the company, which manages over \$267 billion¹ for investors around the world.

The network, known by the acronym "UWIN," was launched after a review found that only 18 percent of applications for junior level research positions at Loomis Sayles in 2014 and 2015 were from female candidates.

"Students either didn't know investment management existed or they confused us with investment banking," says UWIN founder Shannon O'Mara, associate director of credit research at Loomis Sayles. "We had to teach them what we are and what we aren't. Investment managers manage assets on behalf of their clients to meet their investment goals, and we work with the Wall Street firms to execute our investment strategies."

Participants for the 2018-2019 school year include 18 undergraduates from Bentley and six students from the University of Massachusetts, Boston. Each student is matched with a mentor from the company's professional staff. Some students also complete two 10-week internships for a wide-angle look at the field, learning about fixed-income and equity research, portfolio management, product marketing and client relationship management. Trainings are also

offered on technology tools, communication skills, interview preparation and a “Trading 101” session with Loomis Sayles traders after the market closes for the day.

“The mission of the UWIN program is to educate, inspire and recruit women into the investment management industry,” says O’Mara. “Through the mentorship and internship opportunities, we’re trying to change the face of our industry and build a diverse pipeline of talent.”

The program’s well-rounded nature impressed Kristen Moldovan ’20, who participated in UWIN as a sophomore.

“A big thing for me was figuring out what I could do with a finance degree because there are so many different ways to go,” says Moldovan, whose interest in finance started in high school. “The internships gave me a good start in really understanding investment management.”

Mentoring puts the profession in a personal context. Students and their respective mentors meet at least once a month and some pairs confer more often. For example, Jessica Rucker ’18 and her mentor, Heather Young, were in touch weekly in person or by Skype. The latter included contact from about 10 countries when the Economics-Finance major was studying abroad.

“It is so valuable to have someone to bounce ideas off of and answer questions, no matter how mundane or simple,” Rucker says of her connection with Young, a vice president and strategist at Loomis Sayles. “You can hear about the path they’ve taken and how they’ve achieved success.”

Also valuable: learning about Young’s day-to-day work as a strategist for the bank loan team, which involves analyzing companies and recommending specific loans and bonds for investment.

“If she talked about the ratios she was using or the metrics she was evaluating, I’d think to myself, ‘OK, I learned a basic version of that in school, but now I see how the concepts are actually applied,’” explains Rucker. “UWIN really grounded my education.”

The appreciation was mutual. Loomis Sayles hired Rucker as a credit research assistant shortly after she graduated from Bentley.

¹Assets under management are as of 9/30/2018.

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