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Highlighted Alumni Profile - Emma Packham

Posted on Sunday 24th July 2011

BSc Business Management - 2009

Job title and employment details: Envision Coordinator, 1 year internship

Career experiences since graduating

Whilst in my final year of University, I ran for election in the Guild Officer elections and was privileged enough to be elected as Vice President Student Activities and Development for 2009/10. Despite many people thinking it means you get to be a student for an extra year, it is a full time job and the students really do work you hard! This was an amazing experience and fantastic for my career development. Stakeholder relationships, public speaking, negotiating and lobbying, leadership, event and campaign planning, governance and strategy...the list is endless. Following my year at the Guild, I secured a year long internship at the national educational charity, Envision. Here I am the Enterprise and Communication Coordinator, and I work in six schools and colleges in Birmingham to empower the next generation of community leaders.

What was the best thing about your time as a student here?

During my time at the University of Birmingham, I worked part-time at the Development and Alumni Office as an events assistant, building the relationship between past students and the University, I was a Student Ambassador for the Business School, talking to prospective students about the benefits of coming to Birmingham, and I was also a Student Representative, ensuring current students had the best student experience possible. I was involved in Carnival RAG society, fundraising and organising events for local charities, whilst meeting new people and having a lot of fun!

The best thing about being a student at the University of Birmingham, is the sheer amount of opportunities available to students. Part time work where you will be treated well and paid fairly, hundreds of extra-curricular activities to get involved with and develop skills, and plenty of events, both academic and for entertainment. The University ensure you are able to become a part of the community you live in for (at least) three years, including support for your local area (Community Wardens Scheme), bringing the community together (Community Day), and getting you involved (work experience and volunteering opportunities).

In what way did living and studying in Birmingham live up to your expectations?

I hoped that the campus would provide a strong sense of community, which it most definitely did. I also hoped for a busy and exciting city, with places to get involved in the action or to relax. Birmingham offered all of these, and I loved it so much I'm still here!

What advice would you give to current students studying on your degree programme?

A degree is crucial for today's job market, but even more so are the transferable skills that are on offer outside of the lecture room and at the University and the Guild of Students. Even if you don't need the extra cash, a part time job will really help your employability, as will demonstrating leadership skills and commitment to extra-curricular activities.

How did you grow as a person by coming to University? Did it change your life in any way?

Coming to Birmingham definitely gave me the confidence and ability to pursue my passion for the not-for-profit and education sector. Before University I thought I would need to work in the private sector before I would be skilled enough to work for a charity and make a real difference. However after working part time for the Alumni Office whilst studying and working at the Guild of Students, I realised I had the skills to make a real impact and decided to pursue my ambition.

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