

## Looking beyond the horizon

One of the most misguided notions of conventional wisdom is depicting that the SIA program is not suited for working in regular companies but rather in research, development agencies, NGOs or in academia. This narrative unfortunately, is echoed by a lot of present and past SIA students. This often prevents SIA students like myself from exploring options outside academia or research.

My name is Kofi Barnes, I am in my fourth (4<sup>th</sup>) semester of the SIA program studying International Agribusiness and Rural Development Economics. I am also currently interning as a Market Intelligence Analyst at BIOMIN Holding GmbH in Austria.

BIOMIN is a leader in animal nutrition and health, which develops and produces feed additives, premixes and services for the improvement of animal performance, in an economically viable way. BIOMIN products cover solutions for mycotoxin risk management, holistic approaches towards promoting growth naturally as well as specific solutions that address dietary requirements for swine, poultry, dairy and beef cattle as well as aquaculture.

I first encountered BIOMIN when I attended last year's Praxisbörse at the north campus. When I met the representatives from BIOMIN, they gave me such a warm welcome and told me a great deal about the company. I told them what I was studying and what kind of opportunities I was looking for. From our conversation, it was apparent that interning as a Product Manager would be fitting for my skills and course of study. As such, I was asked to bring my CV the following day as they will be returning to the central campus for day two (2) of Praxisbörse.

I submitted my CV and two weeks later, I had a skype interview with the company and received the good news the following day. I was elated, as I had spent majority of my time in the summer semester looking for an internship.

I was initially employed as a Product Manager Intern for four (4) months. Through this experience, I had the opportunity to attend countless basic and advanced trainings. I also had the opportunity of giving basic product training to new staff members. These were very useful as they made practical things I had learnt in the university. I also had the opportunity to travel and attend conferences abroad with the company.

After the end of my four (4) months contract, the company decided to extend my internship and offered to change my role to intern as a Market Intelligence Analyst. Here I am able to apply the knowledge I have gained from SIA courses such as World Agricultural Markets and Trade, Quantitative Research Methods, Econometrics, Agricultural Price Theory etc.

I also have the opportunity to use the data I collect for my master thesis. This is perfect for me as the results of my master thesis will actually be useful for the company. Moreover, being paid to write your thesis? Who doesn't like?

The working environment at BIOMIN is definitely the best working environment I have worked in. My colleagues and bosses are always eager and more than willing to help and explain things to me. I have learned so much working in both Product Management and Market Intelligence. The skills I have acquired so far at BIOMIN and still acquire will definitely spur me on to achieving my long-term professional goals.

The SIA program offers varied opportunity to work in various organizations. I entreat my fellow SIA colleagues who may not be interested in working in research or acquiring a PhD immediately to explore options with Agricultural companies. This offers a different perspective on how the knowledge we acquire from the SIA program can be applied.

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