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2011 Graduate, Computer Information Systems
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Why did you choose CIS as your major?

I was originally a Marketing major but decided to double major in that and CIS and eventually pursue a career in the CIS field after several discussions with my CIS 310 professor, Clay Posey. We talked about various data breaches that occurred at the time as well as many other aspects involved with information security which significantly garnered my interest in the area. The implementation of the Information Assurance program at the time was also a big motivator to pursue CIS as well.

Describe your career path since graduating and what you are doing now.

After graduation, I moved to Baton Rouge to work at TraceSecurity which is a security services consulting company. I worked there as an Information Security Analyst and later as an analyst team lead prior to leaving the company after being there for almost three years. I gained so much valuable experience there in such a short time due to the type of work involved as well as some of my mentors' constant assistance during employment. I performed a variety of services for clients, such as penetration tests, security assessments, security audits, and social engineering engagements. I also acquired a few security certifications while working there. If you've ever been interested in hacking into systems or perhaps walking into a bank vault while pretending to be a pest inspector or telecomm worker, then I highly suggest looking up this company or others like it. I enjoyed the work but needed a change of pace and scenery, so I relocated to Nashville, TN about eight months ago to work as an IT Compliance Analyst for a major payment card processing company called Comdata. At Comdata, I manage projects with many internal teams to ensure we meet PCI, ISO, and other industry regulations/certification requirements. I plan to eventually transition back into Infosec.

Looking back, what were some of the most valuable classes/experiences while you were at Tech?

My most valuable classes were definitely my Information Assurance classes. That was my field of interest, and I really enjoyed learning more about data security and data forensics. The lab exercises were surprisingly very fun. I still remember the cryptography exercises, Wireshark packet sniffing, and metadata hunting with EnCase and FTK. I'd have to say that my most valuable experience was getting to travel to South Korea a few times before graduation to visit my wife's family. It was amazing to experience an entirely different set of customs, food, etc. If you ever have the opportunity to travel during college, I highly recommend visiting another country so you can broaden your horizons before moving into the corporate world.

If you could go back and do your undergraduate years over again, is there anything you would do differently?

I would have certainly tried to get an internship. I did not participate in a formal internship unfortunately. Though, I was able to acquire some valuable experience prior to graduation while working on Mr. Eddy's team as a student worker. During that brief time, I assisted with the management of the Mediasite Smart Classroom technology and also assisted Dr. Fuller with the configuration and administration of the labs for the Information Assurance classes. Even though I was very lucky that Mr. Eddy, Dr. Roberts, and Dr. Fuller gave me that opportunity, I do feel that a formal internship would greatly assist students after graduation, as it was a consistently asked question during interviews. More importantly, I would have taken the time to enjoy my life outside the classroom more. I was so involved in managing group projects and keeping my grades up that I didn't truly enjoy my college years as much as I should have. I was often studying while my friends were out having fun. Looking back, I realized that those years are gone in a flash and it's always good to enjoy them as much as you can while you can. A high GPA is nothing more than a quick talking point during the interview and speaks nothing of your real world experiences. I often found myself discussing more about my travels to South Korea or why I love computers than my GPA.