

OPCD Podcast: Episode 1 - “Tigers on Wall Street” (9/27/2014)

Interview with *Mr. Frank Oprandy, Director of Graduate Career Services in the Office of Professional and Career Development, Harbert College of Business* and *Mr. Peter Lund, Senior in Finance, Harbert College of Business*

Voiceover: Hey everyone! Thanks for joining us here on the Harbert College of Business OPCD podcast. My name is Anna, you are tuning in to the first official episode and I’m so excited that we’re gonna get the chance to hang out here every week. I’m hoping that this podcast not only helps you connect with the students and faculty around you but also opens the door to opportunities and resources that’ll help you achieve your goals. There’s some great stuff in the works for future episodes and we’re kicking things off today talking about the Tigers on Wall Street program.

You may think that the name Tigers on Wall Street says it all, but Mr. Frank Oprandy of the Office of Professional and Career Development will fill us in on the details.

F. Oprandy: The Tigers on Wall Street Program started four years ago, primarily as an educational process to get students up to New York to get them in front of Wall Street firms. It was an educational process in the beginning primarily because students would say “I want to go into investment banking” but they may not really have had any context of what they were really getting in to. So we took them up there, got them in front of the firms, the firms would do presentations on investment banking, sales and trading, equity research and the different facets. Mergers and acquisitions, whatever it may be, private equity, all those pieces. And so students would come out of that and either say “Oh my gosh, I love that - it is what I want to do” or they’d come back and say “Oh my gosh, I’m glad I didn’t pursue that, because that’s not what I want to do.” We’ll leave on Monday morning and we’ll come back on Friday afternoon. When we arrive, we literally spend every day going and visiting firms across the spectrum - again, investment banking through private equity, hedge funds, restructuring. We’ll go to the New York Stock Exchange, which helps us to really pull together the entire set of activities in the firms that are out there.

Voiceover: And for a first-hand account of a student who has been on the trip we’re talking today with Peter Lund.

P. Lund: One of the first days we went to see Goldman Sachs. They take you on a bus, they load you up, you go to the lobby, you stand in front of very intense security guards and they give you badges. Then they take you up to the fortieth or fiftieth floor and they put you in a conference room that’s usually used by CEOs and CFOs and very important meetings. Here you are a student from Auburn, Alabama. I never would’ve had that opportunity if I had not been on this trip. We sat down with one of the heads of their banking division in New York. Who gets to do things like that? You have a managing director who probably has five hundred other things to do but he sat down with us. A

senior VP sat down with us. They brought in people from three different branches just to talk to us about what their area does. People who had better things to do with their time but they devoted it to our group and that's thanks to the people who set this up, thanks to Frank Oprandy, thanks to OPCD, because they most certainly didn't have to do that.

Voiceover: And the great news is that this program's benefits go far beyond the boundaries of the professional world.

F. Oprandy: We also do an alumni event where Auburn folks who maybe are in the business, and even those who are not, but people who live in the New York area can meet with students to give them advice on "this is what it's like to live here in the city. It's not like Auburn, it's not like Atlanta, it's a special place." How to navigate getting an apartment, all those kinds of things. Plus they get another name and another relationship within the city and can potentially use that to find opportunities in Wall Street firms, or other firms as well.

Voiceover: So you may be curious at this point to know how students are chosen for the trip. What makes an application stand out and does it matter what major you're in?

F. Oprandy: Really we try and use the criteria that the firms use. You've got to have an interest in the marketplace. You've got to be following it on the news. You've got to be reading the Wall Street Journal. You've got to really be interested in it, regardless of your major. Now we might not have the same numbers that they're looking at, where as they might be 3.5 we might say a 3.2 student or a 3.0 student. Because if they have a compelling story and they have that interest and they want to be there, they're going to find a way to get there. And we want to help foster those relationships that allow them the opportunities to go for it.

Voiceover: Very cool! And if you're interested in applying check out the College of Business website or email Mr. Oprandy at frank.oprandy@auburn.edu because that application deadline is not far off! Speaking once again with Peter, I asked him what he took away from the Tigers on Wall Street experience.

P. Lund: For me Tigers on Wall Street gave me a direction. It gave me a confirmation of what I wanted to do. The following summer I ended up getting an internship in New York working for an investment bank based off of this. But the best part about the experience is, it doesn't matter if that's what you want to do. If you get there and say "this is wonderful, but it's not for me" that's just as important and going there and saying "this is what I want to do." Because that's something you won't know until you try. And it's better to know going up there and saying "this doesn't fit with my interest" than accepting a job there and realizing you have two years working in a job that's not the right fit for you. So going up there, talking to this wide range of people, you can find out

if 99% of the people you talk to you can say “that’s not for me, that job isn’t for me” but that 1%. Even if that’s not for you, they could be a mentor, they could be a resource.

Voiceover: And Peter’s words of advice to anyone out there who’s still unsure as to whether or not this program would be beneficial.

P. Lund: It’s a no-brainer. You have to go on this trip if this is of interest to you. It doesn’t matter if you’re a finance student, an accounting student, a pre-business student who doesn’t know quite yet what field you want to go into. The amount of access you have, the amount of information you get, the amount of contacts you’re able to make, the amount of fun you get to have on this trip - it’s not all about meetings. It’s about the meetings, it’s about the people you meet, you get to see the wonderful city, it’s all expenses paid. This is a no-brainer - do the trip.

Voiceover: So there you have it! Thanks so much to Mr. Oprandy and Peter for sharing that info with us here on the Harbert College of Business OPCD podcast and we’re looking forward to talking with the students who are chosen to participate in this year’s program. Additional information about the trip can be found on the College of Business website and be sure to check back for next week’s podcast episode, either on the OPCD facebook page or, starting next week, on itunes. We’re looking forward to talking with you again soon - so until next week, War Eagle!