Health Services Management & Community Development (HSMCD) Alumni Career Profiles

Whether you are a first year student exploring career and major options or an alumnus who is thinking about a job change, alumni career profiles provide opportunities to learn about a professional’s career path and decision-making process. Alumni career profiles are provided for students exploring degree options or alumni who are considering a job transition to learn more about the career paths taken by our program graduates. The profiles provide a glimpse of the wide range of careers available to Health Services Management and Community Development Professionals.

Alumni Career Snapshot

- Jordan Kitchen, Class of 2006
- 1st position after HSMCD Graduation: Pharmaceutical Sales Representative, Eli Lilly & Co.
- Current Position: Orthopedic Implant Sales

Why did you choose to major in HSMCD? If you were starting out again, what would you do differently?
I first came to WSU in 2001 on a track and field scholarship and planned to pursue the Physician Assistant program. When it became a master’s program, I decided the next best thing was HSMCD as I didn’t want to pursue a master’s degree yet. I knew I still wanted to be involved in patient health care and be able to give back to the community. Looking back I have no regrets about the path I chose because happiness is a journey, not a destination and I’m currently having a blast.

Describe your career path since graduation.
About a month after graduation, I received a job offer from Eli Lilly & Co. as a sales representative. I enjoyed a lot of success in my first year. I was recognized as someone with potential for success and was placed on a management “fast track,” for receiving Eli Lilly’s “Rookie of the Year” award, and the “Sales Representative Turn Around Award” for success, leadership, and teamwork in the field. I hope to relocate to Indianapolis, Eli Lilly’s corporate headquarters, in the next year and get on their brand or marketing team and then hopefully get into the management side of things.

What advice would you give to someone just starting the HSMCD program?
You get out of it what you put into it. Get involved as much as you can. You’ll be more satisfied at the end of the day and get a good sense of whether HSMCD is a good fit for you. Get involved at every level. Any kind of leadership you can develop in college is vital. These opportunities will carry over in your job. It’s not about

“One of the many things I’m slowly learning out here in the ‘real world’ is that people are nothing more than the product of their environment and the environment you fostered within. Not only the HEALTH student organization, but the HSMCD program helped enable me to achieve the success I’m currently enjoying. I can’t wait to be in a position someday to achieve results through people as well.”
having a good resume or getting the job, but about ensuring you have the skills and abilities you need to be successful at the next level. A quote that has always been dear to my heart is the saying “what would you attempt to do if you knew you wouldn’t fail.” The only person who can hold you back is yourself.

What did you enjoy most about the HSMCD program?
I really enjoyed the opportunity to get involved at the community level and to see the impact, events we hosted, had on the community. There was a sense of accomplishment before we even left campus. I enjoyed being involved in the practical application – getting involved with the community, our advocacy efforts and the community development aspect.

Where did you do your practicum and what did you learn from it?
I did my practicum with Via Christi Health System in the Integrated Absence Management and Workers Compensation program. I was involved in a research study on falls in hospitals. We looked at numbers in a different way. I learned that sometimes in order to save money you have to spend money. Prevention is so important, but it is also difficult to do. Prevention is difficult to measure, much more difficult than you might imagine.

What is your current position and how long have you been with your employer? Describe the main responsibilities of your position.
I am a sales representative for Eli Lilly & Co., a major pharmaceutical company. I will have been employed by Eli Lilly for two years in June 2008. I am the medical liaison between the company and physicians. I carry a lot of pharmaceutical drugs that have the potential to have a huge impact on patient lives. There is so much information. You have to get the right drug to the right doctor for the right patient. You could say I am a pharmaceutical educational resource for physicians.

What are some of the things you like to do in your work?
I love to develop and foster mutually beneficial relationships. It is not just about the ability to meet doctors, develop common ground, and establish a relationship. More importantly, what do I need to do to be a valuable resource and help make the doctor’s practice go smoother and to help their patients. The patient focus is always in the forefront for me.

What do you find most challenging about your job/graduate program?
Keeping it interesting and getting over the repetitiveness of it. I have to re-energize before every call. Your attitude makes a big difference in how you do your job and how you perceive your job. I love to be creative, to develop new ideas to get messages across. I like to come up with original, fun, and creative things to get the message across.

What skills are most important for your kind of work?
Organization is huge. You are out by yourself a lot. The job requires self-initiative. You have to hold high standards for yourself. The skills and abilities we learned in the HSMCD program contributed very favorably in my growth as a sales representative.

Where, in your opinion, is the best place to look for a job in this field?
My best suggestion, and this is specific for Eli Lilly, is to get on the company’s website (www.elililly.com), fill out their application and post your resume. You will have to complete an on-line test. If you pass, they will get in touch with you to set up an interview. They say, “The hardest part of the job is getting the job.” Ask yourself what it is about your resume that will identify you as a self-starter with leadership ability.

What job search methods did you use to obtain your current position?
I got on Eli Lilly’s website and completed an online application and online test. They followed up with a phone screen interview and then 6-8 interviews in the course of about 4 months. I applied in about January before I graduated with the HSMCD degree in May.