

UNDERGRAD

NEWS

VINCENT HOFER WINS RHODES SCHOLARSHIP

Agricultural Economics

Kansas State



MANHATTAN -- Vincent M. Hofer, Franklin, is one of 32 winners nationally of a Rhodes scholarship. Hofer is K-State's eighth Rhodes winner since 1986.

"All of us at K-State are thrilled and overjoyed that Vincent Hofer received a Rhodes scholarship," said K-State President Jon Wefald. "We are delighted that Vincent will have an opportunity to represent K-State for two years at Oxford University. Any time any university can boast of having a Rhodes scholar, it is something very special for that university. Such a win speaks to Vincent's academic abilities and also to the quality of education he received from K-State faculty."

Hofer, a 2008 graduate in agribusiness, works for U.S. Senator Sam Brownback in Washington, D.C., as a legislative correspondent.

"The Rhodes will give Vincent the chance to pursue Latin American studies and Development Studies at Oxford University, one of the top universities in the world," said James Hohenbary, assistant dean for nationally competitive scholarships. "Having gotten to know Vincent through the application process, I am convinced that he will make excellent use of this opportunity. Not only an outstanding student and leader in his career at K-State, he has a great work ethic, intense intellectual curiosity, and a deep concern for the welfare of others. I am thrilled to see him recognized in this way."

After completing graduate studies, Hofer plans to pursue a career in international development. At K-State, Hofer received the Anderson Award for Outstanding Leadership, and as chapter president, he was instrumental in leading the K-State National Agri-Marketing Association team to back-to-back wins in national competition.

Other leadership offices he held at K-State include president and vice president of the Agricultural Economics and Agribusiness Club, vice president of Blue Key Senior Honor Society, and the vice president and treasurer of the Ag Competition Team Council. Hofer was a recitation instructor for a class of 40 students in agricultural economics, named the Agricultural Economics Department Outstanding Senior of the Year, and a recipient of \$28,000 in merit-based scholarships during his college years, including the leadership scholarship. He participated in many different community groups, including being a youth minister leader at St. Thomas More Catholic Church, active in St. Isidore's Catholic Student Center, and volunteer coordinator for the Special Olympics Polar Bear Plunge.

In fall 2005 he studied in Geelong, Australia, and in summer 2007 he was a financial analyst for the Inter-American Investment Corporation and a research assistant at Zamorano University in Tegucigalpa, Honduras. A 2004 graduate of Girard High School, he is the son of Chris and Nancy Hofer, Franklin.

K-State is second among state universities to the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, in Rhodes competition since 1986. Since 1986, K-State has had 11 Marshall Scholars, 23 Truman Scholars, 60 Goldwater Scholars and 19 Udall Scholars.

"This reaffirms what Paul Harvey said on his nationally syndicated radio program - that K-State is the student scholar capitol of America," Wefald said.

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ASHLEY GUENTHER NAMED 2008-2009 K-STATE AMBASSADOR



MANHATTAN -- To Ashley Guenther and Donnie Hampton, being named Kansas State University's 2009 student ambassadors will give them the chance to promote a university that they say has already given them so much.

The K-State Student Ambassador Program, which was established by

the K-State Alumni Association in 1977, inducts a male and female student each year to represent the student body at association events throughout the state and at university activities.

"I have cherished my K-State experience and am excited to share my passion for our university with everyone," said Guenther, a junior in agricultural economics and agricultural journalism and communications, Ottawa.

"I cannot express how blessed I feel to be given such an amazing opportunity to represent the school that I love," said Hampton, a junior in management information systems, Leavenworth.

Student ambassadors visit with prospective students and alumni at events across the state, attend Student Alumni Board meetings and activities, assist with programming on campus like class reunions, Homecoming Student Committee and other special events, as well as assist the president's office as needed.

Typically, ambassador candidates excel academically and are extensively involved in volunteer and philanthropic activities.

Guenther is a College of Agriculture honors student, a member of the college's Student Alumni Board and an ambassador for the College of Agriculture. In addition, she is president of the Agricultural Economics/ Agribusiness Club, recruitment vice president for Alpha Delta Pi sorority and service co-chair for Chimes, the junior leadership honorary.

ALUMNUS THRIVES ON CHANGE AND PRESSURE



Justin Patterson wakes at 5:30 am and heads out the door without a cup of coffee.

"I used to drink two or three cups of coffee in the morning, now if I drink one, I'm already too hyper for the day," he said smiling.

Patterson works as a commodity trader for ADM and counts on the job to provide any needed adrenaline.

More than a million dollars

passing through his hands each day can create quite a trader's high.

"When the markets rally and the phones are ringing off the hook, you reach this point where your heart is beating outside your chest. The adrenaline pumps through you," Patterson said.

His desire to work in commodity trading began in Dr. Sean Fox's class at K-State.

"We did pit simulations and lost a lot of money. It was good that it wasn't our own -- but it felt real enough to give you a taste of what trading was like," he recalled.

Patterson felt well prepared for the demanding day to day work environment he now lives. His classes gave him a strong foundation for the markets as well as an understanding of risk management tools. However, it isn't just Dr. Fox's class that he utilizes.

"I'm still learning, but I feel like I'm ahead of the curve. I use my Ag Econ training each day, not just in dealing with commodities. I think as broadly as economic rent when I'm analyzing the markets," he shared.

Even though he felt prepared, commodity trading isn't for the faint of heart. The work demands long hours and constant vigilance.

"It's a stressful job, definitely a young man's career. ADM does a great job of keeping you moving so that you are working with different commodities and with different people. If you can multi-task and handle pressure and you like an ever changing environment, commodity marketing is for you," he said.

"Some days you wish you had two extra sets of arms to get everything done. You're making choices while the market is for you or against you. No matter what, you can count on the fact that when the market goes it goes.

Market volatility has added another dimension to Patterson's job.

"Volatility makes the job more interesting, but also increases the risk so that time is more valuable than it used to be. In the past the markets could move 10 cents in a day, but now they can move more than a dollar," he said.

But even with the pressure of an intense environment, Patterson manages to find reward on the job.

"Amidst the challenges there are great opportunities to serve. I have an account in Texas where they were running out of soybean meal. Their supplier had no way to get any to them, but I was able to be resourceful and send a truckful down to them the next day. It helped them out of a bind, and it made me feel good," he said.

SPRING 2009

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Spring Calendar

January

15 - 1st day of classes
19 - Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday - no classes
28 - Agri-Industry Career Fair

February

1 - Scholarship Applications due
4 - Last Day for 100% Refund on Classes
5 - Graduate Applications Due
11 - Last Day for 50% Refund on Classes
19 - Last Day to Drop without a "W"

March

16-20 - Student Holiday Spring Break
23 - Last Day to Drop
Enrollment for Summer/Fall 09 begins

April

18 - University Open House

May

11-15 - Final Exam Week
16 - Commencement

GRADUATING STUDENTS - STAY CONNECTED THROUGH K-STATE EMAIL

Your K-State email account is yours to keep even after graduation if it is forwarded to another email account. Don't be left out on the opportunities and events taking place here at K-State -- forward your K-State email and remain part of the community.

NEW SEMESTER SCHEDULE? MAKE ROOM FOR AGECON/ AGBUS CLUB

It's the start of a new semester and before you fill up all your weekends and evenings, be sure to leave room for the AgEcon/AgBus Club. For more information on meeting dates, semester activities, and times visit the department website.

Some of the upcoming events include:

Trips - Chicago, Arkansas, Kansas City, and Topeka
Volunteer Service Projects - Relay for Life
Intramural Activities - Co-ed Volleyball
Social events - Bowling, bonfires, barbecues

AGRI-INDUSTRY CAREER FAIR

January 28, 2009
K-State Union Ballroom
11:00 AM-4:00 PM

Meet with employers from a wide range of agricultural-related industries and learn about available full-time job and internship opportunities.

TIPS FOR A TOUGH JOB MARKET

Keep in mind that you are dealing with a very tight job market. Therefore, be prepared for the possibility that the job-search process could take longer than usual.

Have a job-search plan and keep good records of your contacts and resources.

Your resume is your marketing tool. Revise your resume and make sure that you target your resume to the position you are applying for. Avoid using a resume that is too general.

Don't mail your resume without a cover letter. Your cover letter should be well written and should briefly and effectively highlight the strengths that are critical for the position you are applying for.

Don't limit yourself to one single job-search approach. Use different methods such as: direct employer contact, resources such as directories, newspapers, online postings, etc. Also remember, networking is an effective job-search technique. Use your support systems, such as: family contacts, friends, past and present internships and employment contacts, etc.

Thoroughly research the organization before you go for the interview.

In the interview, always stress your skills, accomplishments and strengths as they relate to the job you are interviewing for.

Be flexible and have reasonable expectations of both position and salary. If you see a future job potential, sometimes it may be helpful to consider a temporary or part-time position.

Learn how to deal with rejection in your search. If you get rejected for a job, use the experience to prepare yourself better next time. Avoid feeling sorry for yourself or blaming others. You should always ask yourself: what did I do wrong and how can I improve on that next time?

NEED MORE HELP FINDING A JOB?

Career and Employment Services is available to students free of charge to help you find a great job. Mary Ellen Barkley knowledgeable about the ag industry and is happy to assist you in your search.

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DISTINGUISHED ALUMNUS CHALLENGES AG ECON STUDENTS TO HIGHER ACHIEVEMENT



MANHATTAN -- It's not often a respected businessman shares the keys to his success with students, but this was Steve Irsik's goal as he challenged students to achieve more at the recent Department of Agricultural Economics Awards Banquet.

Irsik, named the 2008 Distinguished Alumnus, is no stranger to success. He is General Partner of Irsik Equities, L.P., a family owned agricultural business with headquarters near Garden City, Kansas. Irsik Equities involves significant interests in farming, a native grass ranch, commercial Angus cows, dairy, commercial cattle feeding, feed milling, and further processing. Steve is an entrepreneur who has vertically integrated the cattle and grain segments of the business.

He views several areas to be crucial as students position themselves for the future.

First, the time spent pursuing a degree is not just seeking a diploma. Expand your mind. Irsik also believes that a bachelor's degree is not enough for the competitive market. A masters degree will become the new bachelors in the future.

Second, networking is a key to future opportunities. Spend time getting to know your faculty advisor and those who provide scholarships. Their experiences and current positions are a great asset as you begin a career.

Love and embrace change. As we've seen in the past few months with the economy, change can happen at any time. Those who anticipate and enjoy change will find themselves in less difficult circumstances. Irsik believes as time goes on change will be more abrupt and accelerate, so dealing well with change will be a competitive advantage.

Fourth, acquire a vision. Spend time dreaming about what you'd like to do and who you'd like to be. Then, take the next step. Develop a vision for how to accomplish your dreams and pursue them.

Finally, be brave. Success comes from being the first out of the box, but it takes guts to take the first step. Failures will come, but success can be achieved by building on what you know and taking risks.

AG ECON STUDENTS NEEDED FOR CENTRAL AMERICA TRIP

This summer Dr. Boland is excited to take a group of students to tour "The Green Revolution." The trip will be May 16 to June 5, and go through Mexico, Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, and Belize.

The study tour will include a visit to CIMMYT in Mexico City to visit with Norman Borlaug who received a Nobel Prize for the Green Revolution. In Guatemala, we will visit with several value-added agriculture projects run by the US Agency for International development and two days in Antigua, the old capital which includes a coffee plantation tour. We will drive through El Salvador and spend four days at Zamorano University in Honduras. This is the best agricultural university in Latin America and various activities are planned with the students. Following that we will spend a day with the US ambassador and visit banana, pineapple, and tobacco plantations. Then we will go back into Mexico to see the Mayan Ruins at Tikal and end with several days in Belize at the beach and reefs. Contact Dr. Boland for more information.

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FOUR PLUS ONE PROGRAM MAKES A GRADUATE DEGREE EASY

With the recession, graduate schools across the country are seeing increased applications from those desiring to weather a tough job market in school. But, deciding to pursue a graduate degree isn't just for fair-weather job applicants. Increased competition naturally leads businesses to seek out the most qualified people to fill their positions. Dr. John Crespi, K-State Ag Econ Graduate Program Director, believes a graduate degree best prepares students for the job market.

"Markets are more competitive today, and an advanced degree can help students differentiate themselves from other applicants, but there is more to it than this. If a student enjoys economic analysis, a bachelor's degree today is simply not sufficient for the types of analysis that I see companies and public agencies performing," Crespi said.

Knowing a master's degree is increasingly important in the job market, the Department of Agricultural Economics developed the Four Plus One program for its current undergraduate students. Four Plus One allows students to complete both a bachelor's and master's degree in five years, instead of the typical six to seven years.

"Economics is all about opportunity cost, so why should our best undergraduate students, who can handle graduate-level work, not be given the opportunity to start their graduate work a little earlier," he said.

Students selected for the program take three courses for graduate credit during their senior year at K-State. MS requirements are completed by taking five additional courses in year five, along with six hours of thesis credit. Students enrolled in the program are appointed as part time research or teaching assistants during their senior year.

"I often hear about financial concerns, but if you think about it, the financial concerns for getting a graduate degree are not different that they were when a student was getting an undergraduate degree. What the Four Plus One program does is lower the costs of graduate school for some students by overlapping the undergraduate and graduate requirements. Our department helps ease the financial burden by offering assistantships to qualified applicants as well," Crespi encouraged.

These assistantships will involve approximately six hours per week working with a faculty member, and pay a stipend of \$1,500 per semester. Following completion of their B.S. degree, participants will receive a 1/2 time graduate research assistantship stipend of \$17,000 for the final year of the program.

Crespi does caution students in an MS program to consider it their job.

"I do not suggest working outside of school while pursuing an MS degree, except for the work that a student would do through an assistantship. Graduate school is tough. It is time consuming. A rigorous program, which we have, will not feel like just another senior year. Students will be pushed. Some students drop out. My advice is do not go to graduate school unless you are willing to give it your best effort." Crespi added.

For more information about the Four Plus One program, stop by Waters 343 for a brochure or contact Dr. Crespi and set up an appointment to talk about the benefits and requirements of the program.