

### Planning for Success

Before starting this semester, the career path I envisioned myself taking involved graduating in the spring of 2015, proceeding directly into graduate school, and finding a job within the financial services field afterwards. Despite my efforts to prepare for the future, the plans I once considered unquestionable have become only options in a much broader scope of what is to come. After recently changing my minor to information technology management, the prospect of gaining a double major in finance and information technology has become a possibility. I feel that gaining two degrees by extending my time at LSU by one semester would be a sound investment towards my future. Since this is my junior year in college, deciding whether or not to continue my education after graduate school has become the pending question for the near future. After speaking to multiple professionals about working or continuing school after graduation, finding a job would likely allow me to fully appreciate and benefit from an MBA program. With multiple factors affecting the path I will follow, my priorities first lie in deciding exactly what I would like to do within finance.

With these new perspectives in mind, deciding what the next move in my career should be has proven to be difficult; however, LSU's CFP program seems to be the best choice. After working for a Certified Financial Planner and his partners this summer, I understand this would be an intelligent career move, especially because the entrance of baby boomers into retirement age will cause financial planning to grow substantially within the future. The median salary financial planners could expect in 2012 was \$67,520. The projected growth of the field is much greater than the average over the next ten years. Approximately 90,200 new openings have been projected over the next twenty years. The majority of these positions will be offered within the financial services and insurance industries. Employment will be available to financial planners within investment and commercial banks as well. Self-employed individuals will face a great amount of competition within the upcoming years as more small and locally owned financial services companies are established ("Careers in Financial Planning Facts and Trends").

Most professionals prefer to hire candidates with a bachelor's degree, and also those who have obtained the CFP certification stand out above the rest. Approximately 57% of financial planners have a bachelor's degree, 25% have a master's degree, and 11% have obtained a professional degree ("Personal Financial Advisors"). To become a financial advisor, I anticipate first working as a junior advisor as part on a team to gain the work-related skill, knowledge, and experience expected of independent entry level financial advisors. I understand that as a female, I will be considered a minority within my career; I now see that as a great opportunity to differentiate myself amongst my peers.

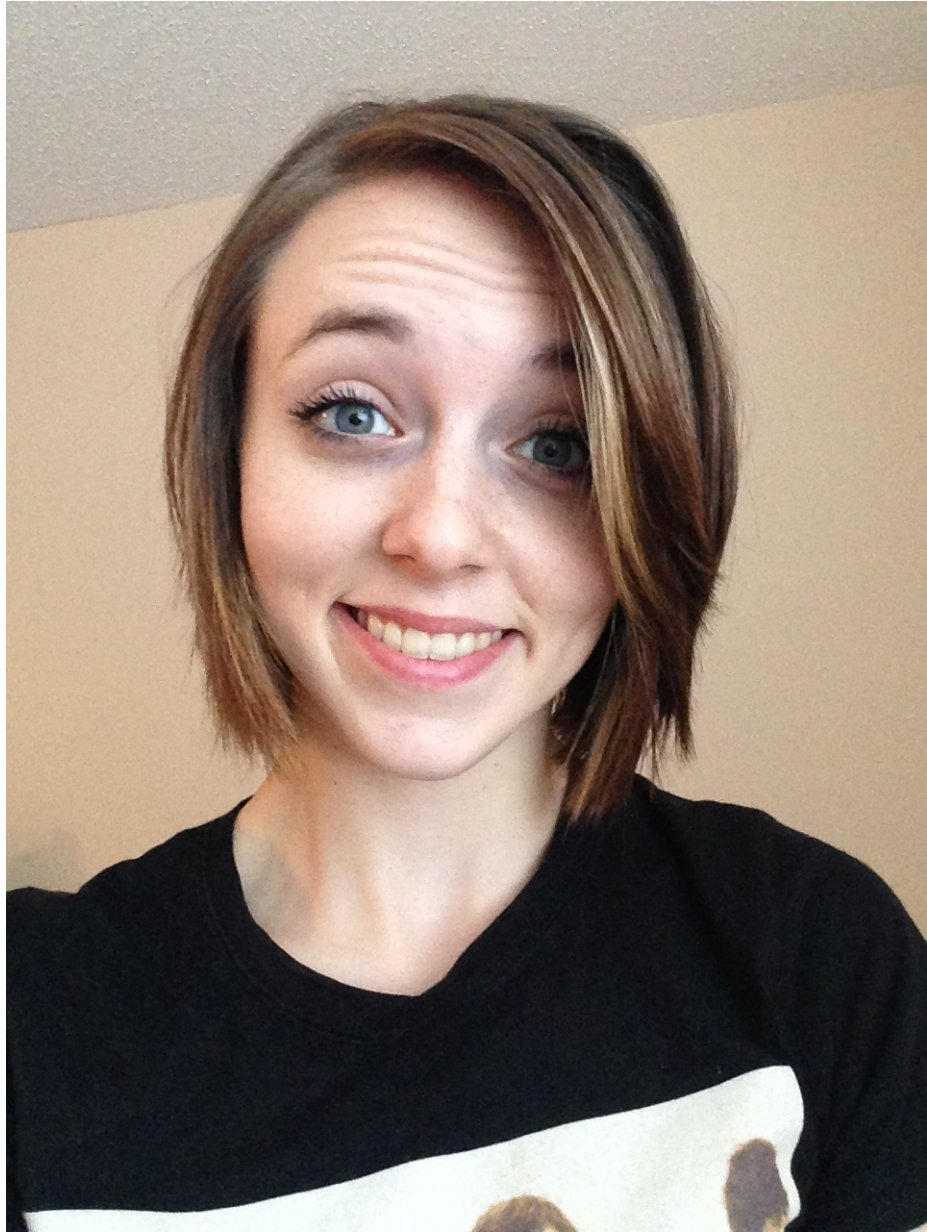
As I plan the next five to ten years of my career, I anticipate graduating with a degree in finance and information systems and decision sciences by December of 2015. Afterwards, moving away from Louisiana will be a top priority. For my first career move, I have contemplated working in Austin, Texas. The culture within the city is phenomenal and exhilarating. Also, the city does not vary greatly in the overall cost of living compared to Baton Rouge. When comparing each, one can see the following:

Costs of Living	Price difference in Austin, TX
-----------------	--------------------------------

Groceries	16% less
Housing	11% less
Utilities	15% more
Transportation	11% more
Health Care	3% more

("Cost of Living Calculator: Compare the Cost of Living in Two Cities")

Regardless of the plans I create now, I understand from experience that objectives and ambitions can change rather quickly and without notice. Therefore, I foresee a second degree in information technology as a plan B for my career. If I were to pursue the field of technology, project management would be my first choice. Approximately 84% of project managers have a Bachelor's degree, and only 16% have obtained a Master's degree. The median wage in the U.S. in 2012 was \$81,140. Within the next ten years, 51,600 job opening are expected because the field is growing rather slower than average at approximately 3-9% per year ("Information Technology Project Managers"). My interest in the career has grown through my enrollment in LSU's ISDS project management course. After reviewing the statistics, I am convinced that pursuing a career in the area would be a viable option if becoming a financial planner does not occur as planned.



Works Cited

"Careers in Financial Planning Facts & Trends." *Careers in Financial Planning Facts & Trends*. N.p., May 2011. Web. 03 Sept. 2013.

"Cost of Living Calculator: Compare the Cost of Living in Two Cities." *CNNMoney*. Cable News Network, 2012. Web. 05 Sept. 2013.

"Information Technology Project Managers." *Information Technology Project Managers*. American Job Center, Dec. 2012. Web. 05 Sept. 2013.

"Personal Financial Advisors." *Personal Financial Advisors*. American Job Center, Dec. 2012. Web. 05 Sept. 2013.