

Wall Street success with some alumni networking help

BY RACHEL DAWSON ('13)

J.P. Kril ('13)

finance major | Radnor, Pa.

As May 2013 graduate J.P. Kril settles into his chair at a desk at Barclays, a Wall Street investment firm, he knows he is ready to give back and become a part of an alumni network that helped him reach his dream job. A finance major from Radnor, Pa., Kril graduated as president of JMU's Madison Investment Fund and had a Wall Street job waiting for him after graduation.

Yet, the odds were not always in his favor.

Kril transferred into JMU after one year of college, losing valuable class credits. In addition, his family faced adversity and became unable to financially support both Kril and his younger sister's college educations.

Determined, Kril refused to end his education. He pursued help from those around him. He shared his story with professors and was eventually connected to the financial aid office. He received a Madison Forever Scholarship, reserved for students with rare and difficult circumstances. The Madison Forever Scholarship program allowed Kril to remain at JMU, yet he didn't rely on financial aid alone. He also worked 25 to 40 hours a week at a local retail store.

The pressure of his circumstances and his workload affected his G.P.A., and Kril realized that test taking wasn't his strongest suit. He reached out to professors and peers in the student-led Madison Investment Fund, in which student leaders manage a portion of JMU's endowment in the stock market.

Students can climb the ranks of the Madison Investment Fund and work as junior analysts to senior analysts, to associate portfolio managers to portfolio managers, and then potentially to the management team led by the student president. "I really enjoyed being a part of MIF because it was something that encouraged thinking outside of the box," Kril says.

Kril's first Madison Investment Fund contact was then-president Justin Quaglia ('11). Kril felt an instant connection and told Quaglia his story. Kril knew he

had the skills and drive to excel, even though he didn't have the G.P.A. required for MIF members. "I wouldn't have been in MIF without Justin," says Kril. "I have the intellectual capacity to succeed, but my peers, professors and alumni opened doors for me."

Kril was accepted into MIF and worked his way up the ranks to become the president after three years. Quaglia, now an analyst at Wall Street's Goldman Sachs Group, was Kril's mentor. With the help of both Quaglia and JMU finance professor Elias Semaan, Kril also has connected with numerous alumni. Quaglia connected Kril with one of his own mentors, Alpha Kiphul ('04), a former Madison Investment Fund president, who helped Kril make it through the rounds of interviews for a summer internship at Barclays. Quaglia knew of Kril's financial situation, so he opened his home to him for the summer.

Kril says, "I had to make sure I wasn't going to embarrass any JMU people, especially the alumni who referred me. After my internship, I got a job offer. It's unique because they created it for me. It's not very common for an undergrad to go into wealth or investment management or portfolio management."

Kril gives full credit to the many alumni and professors who helped him on the path to his dream job with Barclays. He compares the Madison Investment Fund to what Barclays is on Wall Street. "MIF is small but it's growing fast like the JMU alumni base on Wall Street. ... I want to continue the MIF legacy of alumni being mentors helping students reach their dreams." **ME**



'I do have the intellectual capacity to succeed, but it was student peers, professors and alumni who *pushed me through* and gave me opportunities and opened doors for me.'



(Inset, at left): JMU Madison Investment Fund Adviser Elias Semaan has been a valuable resource according to J.P. Kril ('13). "Professor Semaan is the glue that holds everything together. He is the first one to congratulate you and applaud your success, and he is the first one to point out flaws and areas to improve. He's almost like a father figure to our student organization."