

The ANU Student Managed Fund (SMF) Alumni Corner: Alaina Warwick



Alaina is a final year undergraduate student studying a Bachelor of Finance and a Bachelor of Economics.

Alaina began her time with the SMF as a junior analyst in the Asset Allocation (AA) Team. In her second semester, she was elevated to the role of Chief Investment Officer (CIO).

Upon graduation, Alaina will be taking up a position as a junior analyst at Morgan Stanley, a leading global investment bank.

Alaina's Experience in the SMF:

What did you enjoy most about your time in the SMF?

During my first semester as a junior AA analyst with the Fund, the team progressed the Investment Process (IP) to near completion. Completing my section of the IP and understanding the process as a whole was an achievement that I am proud of. Then as CIO in my second semester I got to watch the team complete and present the IP.

As CIO, I enjoyed developing interpersonal relationships with all of the Fund members. I made the most of the opportunity to get a deep understanding of the functioning of each team and the Fund as a whole. This understanding helped me to improve inter-team collaboration and optimise our systems so they were intuitive to use.

What are your main takeaways from the SMF?

My greatest takeaways from the Fund relate to both soft and hard skills. My interpersonal skills and confidence improved markedly, especially in the CIO role. I developed my technical writing

and industry knowledge about fund management. Geoff and Anna (the convenors) have been great mentors and teachers who are heavily invested in each Fund member.

How do you think the SMF has helped you achieve your career and learning goals?

My experience in the SMF brought many learning moments! I learned about the importance of visuals for credibility – a strong theme in the finance industry – and how to work in a team to get the best results. I also learned how portfolio construction works. The two-semester progression of the SMF teaches you how to be both a good team member as a junior and a good leader as a senior. As a fairly independent person, I actually got more out of learning to be a good team member than I expected, which is an underrated skill when initially entering the workplace. The SMF was an integral part of my internship interviews, as an opportunity to learn and then demonstrate the skills that employers are seeking. In the future, I expect the skills and personal development I gained in the SMF to push me further along my chosen path.

What advantages do you think joining the Fund will bring to ANU students?

I believe the SMF is the pinnacle of a finance degree at the ANU. No one else is going to give you the hands-on experience and very real consequences of managing actual money – the Fund has about \$600K to invest. The mentorship and responsibility that I experienced in the SMF was the perfect stepping stone between traditional university courses and my finance-based internship. The Fund instils the importance of teamwork, professionalism and learning through doing. In terms of employability, the Fund unquestionably enhances your resume. But I believe the greater reason to apply is that it will mould you into a better candidate for almost any job.