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Alumni profile: Frederick Olaide Yinka-Kehinde



Olaide is an Analyst within the Private Equity team at Queensland Investment Corporation, a leading long-term specialist manager in alternatives.

Olaide was a founding member of the SMF, beginning his time as Head of the Asset Allocation (AA) Team before going on to become Chief Investment Officer (CIO) in his second semester. Olaide graduated with a Bachelor of Economics and a Bachelor of Finance. He later attained First Class Honours in Investments and Securities, with a focus on Portfolio Construction, Smart Beta and Factors.

Olaide's experience in the SMF:

There were many things I enjoyed during my time in the SMF, particularly the unstructured nature of what we did. In traditional courses, you tend to know exactly what you are getting and what the lecturer is looking for with assessments. The SMF is unique in this sense, as there is flexibility to push the program in a direction that you believe is viable. This process often involves students working outside their comfort zone, being unsure where the correct answer might lie. An example is when we were building the AA model. We spent a lot of time following a specific path that was ultimately found to be impractical. I believe that this time was not time wasted, but rather crucial in the learning process. Mistakes are all part of the experience.

Another aspect of the SMF that is unique is both the collegiate and collaborative environment conducive for ambitious and inquisitive students to thrive, especially as a team. This is vastly different to traditional group assignments; students in the SMF are all working towards a centralized goal to achieve the best outcome within their capabilities as students.

What are the challenges that you faced during your time in the SMF?

I found the process of assimilating myself into the SMF's processes quite challenging initially, particularly as a founding member. I personally found it difficult to adjust to a new structure where students were given autonomy in terms of their approach to a matter and the high degree of responsibility that followed. At the time, we were unsure of the bigger picture and what direction we wanted to take. It took me a while to appreciate it was up to us as students to make the decisions.

A more specific challenge I experienced was creating the AA models. The Active Australian Equities (AAE) team was quick to establish its model, which was a version of the model from the Corporate Valuation course that they were able to adjust to their specifications. Whereas in AA, it is more of an art than a science to build a model, as said by my lecturer in the ANU Portfolio Construction course. In creating our model, we

realised that part of our investment decision-making process needed to be systematic to a certain degree. At the same time, the process had its own degree of art which could easily shape different views dependent on the decision maker. This was the greatest challenge without a doubt, but also the most rewarding challenge I faced throughout my time in the SMF.

How has the SMF helped your career?

My experience in the SMF has undoubtedly helped me throughout my career. A large factor in getting a role is being able to distinguish yourself from other candidates by speaking to your accomplishments and experience. Throughout the interview process, I found that my time in the SMF allowed me to build a narrative, while demonstrating initiative, ambition and tenacity to learn new ideas and different approaches. It allowed me to highlight an ability to succeed in an unstructured environment, ultimately mimicking the nature of the workplace.

Is there any advice you would give to students joining the SMF?

An open mind and willingness to learn are most important. One of the things that initially held me back was a lack of flexibility in my way of thinking. After finishing the Corporate Valuation and Portfolio Construction course, I was in the mindset that 'this is how this has to be done.' I soon realised that my mindset hindered me and my team.

I would also say don't be afraid to speak. A challenge we had as founding members was that nobody really wanted to speak and share their thoughts. An example from my second semester is that the team made a fantastic presentation on an investment recommendation. But nobody really asked any questions in fear that they might be asking obvious or unintelligent questions. In my experience, the adage that "there are no stupid questions" is true! Don't be afraid of making mistakes – you can't truly learn without making mistakes.

As a founding member, what changes in the SMF have you noticed? And what has stayed the same?

During my time, we weren't too sure where we were going exactly, especially given the long-term goal of funding the SMF Equity Scholarship. It is great to hear that the students of the SMF have been able to build portfolio value to help the SMF fund future scholarships.

I'm really happy to hear that the SMF students are continuing to enjoy the course as much as I did, if not more. I loved the course during my time, to the point that I almost forgot I had other coursework to complete!

I think today's SMF students have two fantastic leaders in Geoff and Anna. Both are incredibly intelligent and boast a track-record academically that speaks for itself. They really made the difference and got it right when it comes to having the right type of supervisors. They struck the perfect balance between allowing students to explore and learn while filling in gaps in our knowledge. I encourage students to soak in all the knowledge that both Geoff and Anna have to expel.

Prepared by Liam Asmaro (Relationship Officer)