

## **Sodexo Brings More to Tarleton Students than just Delicious Food**

Sodexo takes great pride in investing in the future of the students they serve. One way that the organization promotes our future leaders is through an internship program. This is critical for not only the University as a whole but also for students who want to find a balance between obtaining an education and developing a career.

Two distinct internship opportunities are offered through Sodexo for exceptional college students – the Dietetic Internship and the Future Leaders Internship programs. Interns are able to turn to leaders in the corporation that are in their field of study to assist in career preparation, i.e. a mentor. This internship helps kick start students' careers with professional experience/knowledge while also maintaining the allowing them to keep up with the living expenses that come with being a young adult and maintain focus on classes.

In order to be eligible for an internship through the organization, a student must be a rising sophomore, junior, senior or graduate student with excellent academic standing and a career goal/ emphasis of study in an industry related topic (i.e. hospitality/food management, facilities/ engineering management, finance/human resources, etc.). The student must also have a great background in leadership and community service.

The Sodexo Unit at Tarleton State University has had incredible participation in this program. We currently have three students that are serving internships and one individual on our management team that continues to thrive from the knowledge he gained throughout his time as a student worker with Sodexo.

Desiree Daniel is currently a senior at Tarleton State University attaining an accounting degree. During her time as a full time student, she applied for an intern position in finances with Sodexo. Daniel explains, "Tanner Smith, Sodexo's Director of Operations, has been a huge part in my success. As my mentor, he has immersed me in real life situations to prepare me for my field of study. I started out helping here and there with cash management, and I am now overseeing the finances for five different units. Sodexo has improved my work, home, and school life by letting me work full-time in conjunction with attending college. They have also made sure that I put my education first. It has been such a blessing to work for Kimberly Miller and the whole team at Sodexo, so much so that I plan to continue my career with Sodexo after I graduate!"

Ashlee Delgado is another one of our interns that is making waves for students and employees alike. Delgado obtained both her undergraduate and graduate degrees from Tarleton State University. She explains, "I was fortunate enough to work for Sodexo while I was in school for both of my degrees. I have gained an abundant amount of knowledge doing everything from food preparation, to creating a new retail location, and also being a part of the team that helped set up an account in Tyler, Texas. I have learned how to provide stellar service to clients during my time here as well as gained health and wellness knowledge, networking abilities, marketing competencies, student engagement ingenuities and customer service. I gained a new

understanding of marketing trends and obtained the ability to identify and pursue nutrition throughout our campus.” She is currently a certified Personal Trainer, Exercise Therapist, and Sports Nutritionist. She has recently rejoined the Sodexo team as a health professional intern pursuing a second bachelor’s degree in nutrition. Delgado expresses her excitement of boosting the nutritional value of dining and retail locations at Tarleton; “By monitoring and networking with clients’ across our website and blogs, I get to provide each individual with personalized services to meet his/her needs. I find new prospects, provide modern solutions, and drive results through health and nutrition. Alongside the knowledge I have gained in my time under both Kimberly Miller and Tanner Smith’s wing, I am embarking on a new path for the health of students and employees alike. My new Sodexo program is called Performance Fitness. I believe that no matter what age, gender, diversity, or disability of any individual, I can create a program that fit their needs. Every individual should dedicate at least thirty minutes of their day to fitness and increasing their wellness. As a company, Sodexo pushes health and wellness through creating an atmosphere where clients feel better, eat better, and look better through proper nutrition and physical fitness. My goal is to change the world one person at a time. Working for Sodexo has been an amazing opportunity for me in all aspects of my career. My goal is to continue to work with Sodexo and the team for many years to come. This internship has set me up for success in the health and wellness career field and I can’t wait to see what the future has in store for both myself and Sodexo.”

Amber Lewis is also a senior at Tarleton State University that is working with us while attending college. Lewis conveys, “Working at Sodexo has truly been rewarding in so many ways. I’m currently working at Tarleton Dining Services for Sodexo and have been with them for going on six years. During these past few years, I have had the opportunity to grow in my career. Really, being with Sodexo has laid out my path while helping me move up through the company and grow in my leadership skills. Currently, I’m a senior at Tarleton, pursuing my degree in Sociology with a minor in Criminal Justice. Upon graduating in 2019, I plan to go into HR with Sodexo. I have been given the chance to work with Alexandra Stasko, the Human Resources Manager II at University of Texas-Austin. With her guidance and knowledge, I have been able to learn the different aspects and levels HR has to offer. It has been an honor to be here and I look forward to many more years with Sodexo.”

Tanner Smith, our Director of Operations, started his 9 year career with Sodexo as an intern. Smith discloses, “I started with Sodexo towards the end of 2009 after returning to Tarleton for the 3rd time as a 21 year-old Freshman. I was invited to eat in the Dining Hall one day by a friend from high school who paid for me with her Dining Dollars; I had never been to the Dining Hall and was shocked to see that the parking lot I used to park in as a freshman in 2006 was now this massive facility. It was during that lunch that I decided to go upstairs and apply with Sodexo. This was after 4-months of being unemployed while I focused on my college education. That was the first time I met Kimberly Miller, who was the Operations Manager at the time. She personally gave me a tour of the facility where I ran into quite a few familiar faces that I had worked with throughout the town of Stephenville in various restaurants. She offered me a job

prior to my departure! This is when I began my career with Sodexo in Tarleton State University's Catering Department.

Joining the Catering team after being a cook my entire life was very eye-opening. I was a stranger to the various styles of food service operations. I quickly became accustomed to working full-time and going to school full-time. Two to three months into working with Sodexo, I attended an internship seminar hosted by Tarleton State University's Career Services department. When I left the seminar I headed straight to Kim's office and asked her about the internship opportunities Sodexo offers. As Kim, herself, had only worked for Sodexo since January of 2009, she had never been asked this question and was very interested in exploring it more. It seemed like I asked Kim every week for months if she was ready to start, and then somehow the roles reversed as she was asking me when I was going to start. So, one day, I decided to dress the part, clock in, and just go for it. I started gaining knowledge from our administrator at the time and dived into the "unwanted tasks" that no one else wanted to or didn't have the time to do. This rolled over into my role in the Catering department. I became the Catering Intern and learned the operational side of the business. It was around the time of my sophomore year that I had become so familiar with the tasks asked of me that I began asking for additional work. I would say this was the turning point in my career as I finally knew what I wanted to do.

Kimberly took me under her thumb that semester and began loading me down with tasks that at the time made no sense to me - small pieces to a large puzzle. It wasn't long before I was fully involved with Sodexo. I started comprehending the ins and outs of the Campus Food Service Industry, all while carrying a 15 - 18 hour class load. Going into my senior year of college, I was handling the work load of a management position and excelling quickly. As luck might have it the company was going through changes right around the time I graduated. My GM was promoted to DM, and Kim was promoted to GM, leaving the Operations Manager position open. I applied and got the position that I had been training for as my time as an intern. I continue to grow! Kim, my mentor, is a huge part of my success story - who I have become and what I have accomplished in my going on 9 years with Sodexo."

These internship opportunities change the lives of students on a daily basis. Leaving college as a new graduate throws students into a world of an ever changing job market. Sodexo is glad that they can provide training beyond the textbook to ensure students can set themselves apart when seeking employment.