

M&T Intern Fellowship Report

I knew that for my first summer as a Penn student, I wanted to work at a small, growing startup and under an intelligent founder in order to maximize the learning opportunity. As I am working on an education and tech based startup myself (www.neevo.co), I felt that something to do with this field would be an ideal match for my aspirations. I searched in the alumni database (Quaker Net) and contacted several people, when finally I was introduced to Dr. Ritu Verma (she received her doctorate in Physics from Penn), and has started an education and social impact focused angel fund in the city of Mumbai. She was more than willing to offer me the internship after a thorough interview and writing assessment.

During the duration of my internship, I worked on a single, but multi-faceted project which involved finding education startup in India to invest in. The process is as follows:

- Using a top-down approach, research the education sector in India and potential profitable areas for intervention which also maximizes social impact. This involved talking to bankers, teachers, education management, government officials and students.
- Focus on two or three of the aforementioned interventions and validate potential solutions by discussing with partners of the firm
- Find start ups and entrepreneurs that are using these solutions and that fit the funds criteria in terms of size, funding needs etc.
- Initiate initial contact between the entrepreneur and angel fund

Therefore, I learned a tremendous amount about the education sector and financing in entrepreneurship, both of which will be valuable for my own endeavors. It also introduced me to the venture capital and private equity sector in India, which has definitely sparked an interest in the field in terms of potential career paths. On a more personal level, it has definitely connected me to my home country as I talked to Indians from all walks of life due to the nature of the fund. A lot of solutions to numerous social and infrastructural issues are highly technological. But to implement these solutions in a rapidly changing, large and bureaucratic country needs a bright entrepreneur who understands negotiation, finance and management.

I would definitely encourage any underclassman to intern at a startup. I feel a lot of students look for the 'big names' when it comes to internships, but at this stage of one's professional career the most important thing is learn and soak in as much knowledge as possible. The one piece of advice I would give to underclassmen looking for internships at startups is to find the right entrepreneur regardless of location. Thanks to the Intern Fellowship Fund, I was able to work in Mumbai with a tremendous entrepreneur. I learned so much from her and met so many interesting people, from rural farmers to hedge fund managers, and most importantly I had a great time in India's financial and entertainment capital.