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BA – Mathematics, WSU '13

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I started at SageFox, which specializes in education research, evaluation, and grant support services, right after graduating from Westfield State University (WSU). I was hired as a Research Assistant to perform data analysis in support of, mostly, federally funded projects. Most often our data analysis starts with the collection of survey data that is collected via paper forms or through online platforms. The data is cleaned, analyzed and compiled into tables or graphs so that results, themes, and trends can be conveyed to clients. Clients use this information to inform programmatic changes, and provide evidence of program goals to funders. I was exposed to this type of work during my time at WSU having worked with Professors Fleron, Ecke, Hotchkiss, and von Renesse, on their National Science Foundation (NSF) funded grant “Discovering the Art of Mathematics (DAoM): Inquiry-Based Learning (IBL) in Mathematics for Liberal Arts” as an undergraduate research assistant.

While I was at Westfield I worked in a local high school for many years. As I progressed through my education at WSU it became clear to me that I didn't want to become a math teacher but was passionate about educational issues. My work at SageFox has been meaningful to me as it supports projects that span the educational pipeline from elementary to graduate education and I have a sense that I am not just making a living but making a difference. We work with institutions all over the country and support projects with a wide range of goals. Some of the topics our current projects address are increasing minority participation, computer science education, and climate education.

During my time at SageFox, currently just over 4 years, my role has changed and evolved. We are a very small company so employees need to be willing and capable of taking on new roles and responsibilities to support company needs. I still currently support data analysis related to projects but this role has become

smaller as I have taken on the responsibility of all financial related matters for the business spanning payroll to working with the NSF on securing an Indirect Cost Rate to contracting with multiple institutional partners and consultants.

One of the biggest take a ways I have from WSU is the ability to evaluate the problem, plan a strategy for solving it, and revise my approach as is needed. The math department stressed a reliance on one's self for completing tasks however they were always responsive to questions and my need for guidance – whether that was with a direct answer, a gentle nudge, or another challenge. This collaborative/challenging work environment has served me well in the workplace as I am often left on my own to find solutions to problems I may have no experience with while always being cognizant of when I should find guidance or help from someone else.