

INTERN SUCCESS STORY



KEVIN HONSAKER

While studying for my graduate degree in cybersecurity, I was afforded the amazing opportunity to attend the Comptroller's Good for Texas Tour: Cybersecurity edition.

During Comptroller Hegar's visit, I saw his character and the plans he had for Texas' cybersecurity field, and I immediately made the life-changing choice to apply for an internship at CPA. As a result, I used my final year of graduate school to invest time in networking with one of the human resources recruiters and came to know the recruiter well enough that on my first day of the internship he remembered me and congratulated me on getting into the CPA internship program.

As an intern at CPA, I was onboarded as a compliance analyst within the Information Security Division (InfoSec). Starting my summer internship was a bit nerve-racking because of the COVID-19 pandemic. I kept thinking that getting to know my colleagues would be impossible and would result in me performing poorly due to lack of connection with my group. The reality was quite the contrary.

InfoSec, as I quickly found out, was like a family.

They included me in discussions and made me feel right at home. This made work enjoyable and meaningful. As a compliance analyst intern, my job was to make sure new systems or modifications to systems followed federal and state cybersecurity standards. Therefore, my first task was to become acquainted with the trajectory InfoSec and Information Technology (IT) had put in place to ensure information security at CPA. To become acquainted with the security process at CPA, I had to read security plans,

policies and procedures; learn the processes compliance analysts perform; and learn about the functions of other subdivisions within InfoSec. My perceptions evolved about what defines a secure system and how controls and standards are used to enforce new or modified technical solutions.



Kevin Honsaker

Once my supervisors felt I had absorbed the basics, I was introduced to my internship project: An update to the risk management process.

I started my internship during a shift in how InfoSec assessed risk. They wanted a new system that would allow them to characterize risk at a granular level, and I was the lucky intern who got to help with this project. Beyond granular risk identification, another desired benefit of this system was to effectively and efficiently prioritize resources. I developed a programming solution that reads documents and creates a spreadsheet of data that are imported into the system, which helps alleviate manual entry of documents, freeing up analysts' time for other tasks.

Working with every member of the InfoSec team was such a pleasure during my internship, and now I get to do it full time. I work with a group of funny, kindhearted and dedicated people as we move toward a more cyber-aware CPA.