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CCSF Class of 2013

UC Berkeley, Haas Class of 2015

Clorox Corporate Finance

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*Tell me about your high school years and how to felt about college, and whether you went straight to college.*

High school for me in Antioch, CA, was interesting and I was still trying to figure out who I was. I pulled As and Bs my freshman and sophomore years. My sophomore year, I had some parent problems and there was a lot of stuff there, so my grades really dropped. My senior year I kind of evened out and got Bs and Cs. Just wanted to get done with school. I am from Antioch, all over the East Bay and then moved to a small city in the woods with my mom and then my dad came and got us, so there was a lot of that stuff going on.

College for me wasn’t something I wanted to do. I graduated high school in 2006 and he graduated college in 2006, so I was kind of like watching him go through it when I was in high school and I don’t know. I didn’t really feel like I wanted to go to college. I knew college was a good idea, but I didn’t want to do it right then. My dad went to Berkeley, but I didn’t want to go right away. I didn’t really like school. It wasn’t hard, it just wasn’t stimulating, so I decided that I wanted to go to school, but not right now and I wanted to get away from all that parent stuff. So, I joined the Navy in 2006. I went over there in July and then I got out in 2010 right before I started CCSF and then spent a year in Chicago, three years in San Diego and then decided that if I wanted to stay in the navy, I wanted to do it with a college degree (to become an officer), but I also knew that if I wanted to be home and be near my family, and so I moved back to the Bay Area and that’s when I started at CCSF.

I wanted to live in SF when I got out of the navy. I kind of knew I wanted to live in SF and do the “big old” financial hub and there would be more opportunities in SF as compared to living at home in Antioch. SF was a real treat, plus I was 22 when I got out of the navy and I wanted to be young in a big city.

*You arrive at CCSF. Where did you begin and how did you navigate?*

I just did everything online. I joined in Spring of 2010 and took your business class and one other computer class. I just did everything online. It wasn’t that hard. I had to take the placement test to find out what math I was going to be in. It wasn’t too bad. I went on assist.org and self-navigated. There was Christina Tinsley when I was trying to transfer into Berkeley. Because when I first got to CCSF, I knew I wanted to transfer to a four-year, but I didn’t have that four-year in mind. But I think when I got in your class when I was doing good in the business class, and you were like: “Go to Berkeley.” That’s a really good school around here. I had never even thought about going to Berkeley. I had thought about Cal State East Bay or something closer. Once I had that in mind, I used assist.org to plan out all of my classes. I might have visited with a counselor once or twice, but they use a computer, too. When I was transferring, Christina Tinsley from the TAPs program at Cal helped a lot with essay writing and making sure I was doing the club and all that sort of stuff. I got into TAP because I didn’t have any money (laughs).

The GI bill took care of three years and I spent three years at CCSF. They expect you to complete four years in three. When I got to Berkeley, I had already used that all up. I was just paying for academic scholarships. I wanted to live at college (I-house). I wanted the college experience?

*How did you build community at CCSF?*

There was a lot of club and I got a lot of community out of the classes I went to because people were doing study groups and that kind of thing. There was a lot of after school clubs that we were part of. One that I was a part of was ABG, Alpha Beta Gamma that you were the sponsor of. That was really cool. You get to meet a lot of people and figure out what you want to do and talk to other people about that and see what they think. That was something that was really good for me. I had never tried to get into Berkeley and I was still learning as I went. So, it was nice to be able to bounce ideas off of other people.

*How was the transition from the navy to CCSF?*

The transition was a little different. I was a little scared when I first went back to school. I had done well in high school when I wanted to, but I wasn’t good at studying and all that stuff. But one thing the navy taught me was discipline, you work hard, you get up early, and I put all those principles into use at CCSF. The hardest thing for me overall was just being older than everyone and being a nontraditional student. Even when I transferred into CCSF, Cal, or even Clorox, all of my peers were 4-5 years younger than me – and that is kind of hard. It’s not the worst thing ever but it is a little different because they are going through a totally different life experience than I am. The studying at first was a little difficult, but it was easy to pick up. I took two classes when I first started just to make sure I could get good grades and get back into the flow of college. After that, I took a full load the whole time and I think I graduated with something like a 3.9, so it wasn’t too hard to keep your grade up, but it was more a confidence thing. Was I going to be good enough to ace these classes just like these other college kids in college are. But that would have been the same had I gone into CCSF or had I gone into Berkeley.

*What’s your best memory of CCSF?*

I could start with my worst memory. Calculus. I hated it. I was not very good at it. I worked my butt off to do that. It was just something I couldn’t pick up – the second part. The first part was pretty easy – derivatives and all that, but the second part, integrals, was pretty tough. My best part was probably split between the classes I took and the teachers. There were a lot of good classes – your business class and Hege’s accounting class. There were a lot of classes I really enjoyed. Read the book, take a test and get an A. And I thought, this is awesome. This is something I am good at, and something I can do. Outside of the classes the teachers and the people were the clubs. That’s where I really got a feel for a lot of student life at CCSF. ABG was my big one. I went to a couple of meetings of the undergraduate investment club, but ABG is the one I really became a part of and I ended up being an officer during my last year. It was cool. Like I said earlier – to talk to people about what they wanted to do, to be collaborative and to talk to people not only about what they wanted to do at CCSF and after, but what they wanted to do in higher education – so between the professor and the classes and the clubs. Those were my highlights at CCSF.

*How did you feel about the curriculum and the instructors?*

I did learn a lot. Especially in my finance and business classes – those are the ones that I took to Haas with me and I had to basically do all of those classes again, but I had a head start because I had it at junior college. The book was different, but all of the classes I had at CCSF, we went over again at Berkeley. It was really beneficial for me to have done it twice. I didn’t have to learn the concepts over and I just had to go back and get the details and apply it. I loved all of the random electives – for example, one poli sci class where the professor printed out all of these really cool excerpts – like government, and we just really talked about each one and you didn’t have to read the whole book, but he gave us like ten pages and told us that it was the core of the book. There were a couple of really good classes. Outside of the calculus class, I don’t remember anything that was out of control. All of the writing classes were pretty easy. So, yeah, I think the instruction was as good as what I got at Berkeley.

The education that I got at CCSF was applicable to the one I received at Berkeley and even on par with Berkeley education.

*Tell me how your CCSF experience compared to Berkeley and what the transition was like.*

I feel like the big difference between City College and Berkeley was that at City College, everybody is working just to transfer. So everybody is like, “I just need to knock out all these classes.” Everybody is just working on where they need to go. At Berkeley, it is like, you made it into Berkeley, so you spread out and start building your group of friends, so CCSF has just a transitory feel to it and it is easier to make friends and everybody wants to be friends with others who have worked so hard, whereas at CCSF, definitely has that community of helping each other, but it is more of “I just want to get out of here,” whereas Berkeley has more of a homely [homey] feeling versus “you’re trying to get through it.”

What did you think you would do with your career during your time at Berkeley?

When I first started at Berkeley, you pretty much have three options at Haas. Accounting, banking and consulting. I didn’t want to do accounting because it was just too boring. Banking seemed high stress and consulting was a bunch of smart people doing interesting business cases, and so when I first started Berkeley I thought that I would be a consultant after – and I kind of had that set. But I wanted to see what banking was like. When I first started I wanted to interview for a ton of banking jobs because I wanted to get that experience and be sure I wasn’t making the wrong choice by choosing consulting so I did an internship in baking at Wells Fargo in their commercial bank and I really didn’t like that. It already confirmed a lot of what I didn’t like about banking and so I was like. Well, I want to go into consulting and I noticed that a lot of the people interviewing me and a lot of the people in my class going into these consulting jobs were a lot of the people that I didn’t want to work with – people I didn’t want to study with in my classes and I didn’t want to work with them in the real world, so I had to take a second to step back and think about what I really wanted to do and what I really wanted out of a job, and what I really wanted out of a job was you know… stable learning environment where I can go in and say, hey I am a college grad, I have never done finance before, can you teach me (and I want to be able to make mistakes and learn from those mistakes) so I wanted to be in an environment where I could come in and they wouldn’t say, “hey you made a mistake, you’re fired.” I wanted an environment where they could coach you and if you make a small mistake it’s fine. Everything will work out and they will fix it. That’s eventually why I went to Clorox. I wanted a stable working environment where I could learn and people I could work alongside. Consulting would have been more high stakes – you make one mistake and you’re out and I knew I would make mistakes – everyone does, but I didn’t want to have that level of stress about it. I wanted to work with people I liked and people I wanted to work with, so when I was doing the consulting interviews, I figured OK, this is not something I want to do long-term. I was looking for roles that were complex, analytical and challenging in a great work environment and I found that at Clorox in Corporate Finance, so that’s what I have been doing for the last, over a year now. I really like it. Corporate finance is really cool. It’s a stable job. You come in, you do your job and you don’t have to worry about it anymore. The most important thing that I got out of Clorox is the people that I have met here. Everybody is really smart, motivated, but no on is… At Haas, one of our principles are confidence without attitude, I find out a lot here. Everyone is confident about what they’re doing and everyone is confident about getting the job done, but they don’t have the attitude that says I am better than everyone because I can do this. They all have this confidence without attitude that I really want at a company that Haas put into all of us, and I find it here.

*What is your role at Clorox?*

Clorox is organized by brand. I am a budget coordinator and I work with manage marketing spend. Any kind of coupons that we put out, any advertising or media on TV, radio, or through ads, and anything sales promotion-based like shelf toppers, or an end cap at the end of an aisle that says “try Clorox II.”

There are coupons with higher redemption rates than others. A FSI (free standing insert) that you get in the newspaper, says the value of the coupon, the redemption rate (FSIs are 1-2%) and IRCs (insert redeemable coupons) if you buy right now on the bottle of bleach – is not 100%. It’s less than 60%. All the coupon, advertising, TV, radio, print, fees for talent and such.

We have the Pine Sol lady who was here for a long time, and Steph Curry, too. He has been doing all of our commercials. We own Clorox, Clorox II, a lot of cleaning products with the Clorox name on it. Things that are interesting are: Soy Vey, KC Masterpiece, BBQ Sauce, Bert’s Bees, personal care items, Glad trash bags and food containers and Kingsford charcoal. Our newest edition is Renew life, a probiotics company.

*What can CCSF do better?*

I would say, I think it up to the students ultimately. I think City College gives a lot of spaces ultimately for people to gather and get together like the clubs – but ultimately, it is up to the student and I think engaging the students more would be top priority for me. Changing the paradigm of just trying to get in, get out and not spend too much time on campus like a lot of commuters do. Whereas, “I want to go to City College because I want to go there, I want to meet professors and hang out on campus and meet students – the same kind of stuff that I got out of Berkeley when I first went there – I would love to see that at CCSF.”

*How did CCSF change you?*

I think the confidence stuff really helped me a lot. When I first got out of the navy, the technical stuff – I knew I was good at it, and I knew I could do the analytics. But I was not so sure I could do the business stuff. And I wasn’t confident enough in myself to put my ideas out there. And in your class in particular, when I first started, I was really quiet, I didn’t want to say anything, I didn’t feel like I had the authority to say anything, because I didn’t feel like I knew anything, so I kind of find that as like a pattern in my life that I always do. I work really hard to try to figure it out, gain the confidence, and then I can start talking like I know what I am saying, but I think it took City college to actually say hey, I know what I am doing and you can do well, you know the stuff because you work hard to do it, and start speaking up. I still have problems with trying to speak more, but I think I figured that out at City College. So, I just keep that with me when I go to new situations. I tell people that I tend to be on the quiet side even though I am a pretty smart guy and I can usually figure stuff out – so just keep that at the back of my mind. Make sure you put yourself out there a little bit more.

*What did you think CCSF would be like? What was your perception before you arrived?*

The junior college that I grew up around was Los Medonas College in Pittsburg, a lot of the students went there because they had to, and they didn’t really want to. There is a lot of like, “I’m not going to go to class.” And they just stay there for years and years and years. So that was my perception of a junior college – it’s not a place where you go to excel. Maybe it’s a place to learn something, but basically to waste time. When I was growing up, the people who graduated ahead of me and went to JCs were not motivated or intelligent enough to hack it, they couldn’t figure it out in high school so they went there to hang out – kind of like a continuation of high school.

So, that was my ideas of JCs when I went to CCSF. That changed a lot – and it all comes down the person. People that want to go to JCs, there’s always going to be the people who want to come in here and work hard, get everything out of it, be part of the clubs, network with professor and people outside in whatever the chosen field is, and then there are going to be others who are just kind of there. I don’t know if that is the stereotype of community college, and I still get a lot of that even to this day. When I went to a resume building workshop one of my first months are Haas, I had JC on my resume, and they said, “just take it off, just drop it right off.”

When I went to a resume workshop, I was actually asked, actually persuaded to take the JC off my resume and to just have the Berkeley on there. I think it is because JCs have a lot of stereotypes about the people who go there right out of high school instead of people who go straight to college.

So, it is something that we need to work on and the quality of candidates that come out of JCs, especially CCSF is really high, especially ones that are going to the Berkeleys, Stanfords and Ivy Leagues and all that stuff. They’re great students, they just took a different path, and I don’t think everybody recognizes that yet.

*Did you take it off your resume?*

Yes.

Where do you see yourself in the future?  
I have my five year plan which I want to update. When I first started college, it was about getting into Berkeley and getting this first job. Now that I have this first job, it’s more about exploring my options and now I have a pretty stable base and I know a lot of what I don’t like, so now it is about trying to find better flavors of what I do like – so finance is something that I really enjoy and trying to figure out what specifically I enjoy about finance and trying to do more of that. I know I enjoy strategy aspects of finance, so that is something that I would like to get into.

Where do I see myself in ten years? I can see myself in management at some kind of Fortune 500 company in a finance role. That is something I can really get behind, and #2, something more risky and something I am a bit more scared of would be like running my own business of some sort. Later down the road, my own consulting business of some sort. Using what I have learned over 30-40 kids and turn it into consulting.

[discussion about the number of kids Patrick and his girlfriend want – he wants six, she wants four]

Tell me how this interview has felt – talking about your past and your life at CCSF. What’s it feel like to reflect on things? It is nice to reflect on things. It is kind of like a warm, glowing feeling. I really enjoyed my time at CCSF and the people that I met at CCSF and it helped me for the better in the long run. Like I said, when I first took your class, I didn’t have any idea of what I wanted to do. I knew I wanted to transfer to a four year, but I didn’t know what four year or what major I would do. I got to travel to Korea for a semester and do that. There are a lot of opportunities and resources at CCSF that are not readily apparent, so you have to scout out for them, because they are not readily apparent. You have to ask around. There are a lot of people who are doing some really cool stuff there. I mean, it’s nice to be able to talk. I want to be able to change that stereotype of JC students, and how people perceive junior college in general. Most of my family has gone through JCs at one time or another, it’s cheaper, you get a really great education, you get to learn a lot of things and explore things and you’re not necessarily on the hook thousands of dollars worth of bills.

It is nice to sit down and talk to you because I hope that it is something that people get to try and enjoy, and hopefully get some benefit out of.

What advice would you give someone entering CC today?

Try a lot of stuff first. You have to try things to figure out where you’re going. Take a lot of exploratory classes in subject you might want to major in. Find out who you have the best relationships with. Which classes are you most driven in? Once you find it, go 110% after it. Join clubs that are a part of it. Not only for your resume, but for your application building – be around other people reinforced me to make the right decision. Do everything you can and start working on it as early as you can so that you can see yourself being the person you want to be in five years, or as a college graduate. Start doing that stuff now.

I know when I first got out of the navy, I wrote down a bunch of stuff about the person I wanted to be in five years, and I started using adjectives used to describe that person, and start trying to put those into your everyday right there. I knew I wanted to be working at a big company and what does a person at a big company do? They’re organized, they think logically through things, they’re concise. If you know that maybe those are not the personality traits that you have, try to figure out how to put those into action in your everyday life. Start early.

*How did you feel when you got into Haas?*

I was really happy. I had been working on it for a long time. It was the culmination of all my work in just one letter. I was excited to be moving on. The JC is great, but I had been there for three years when I transferred so I had seen people go on, so I got a year to do the coaching and teaching stuff and helping people with what they were doing, which I really enjoyed, but I really wanted to get on to my next step of that five-year plan, so I was very happy and proud (inaudible) of the experience that the JC gave that to me.

*What advice do you have for students that don’t get into Haas?*

A lot of what I figured out… So, when I first got into Haas, a lot of people were like… Oh, we figured it out. We don’t have to work hard anymore. There’s a lot of those people that I met just the first few weeks. What I’ve learned since graduating is that the name doesn’t really matter. It’s what you do and what you can talk about in interviews and how you can sell yourself. So, yeah, maybe having the Haas title on your resume is a benefit, but if you have nothing underneath that, or just a person who doesn’t work hard because you got into Haas, that’s not going to fly and it is going to come out in the first 30-minute phone interview that someone has with you. The people that do really, really well not only in college, but also here at work are people that, regardless of where they came from, are people who know what they want, and they organize and prioritize things that need to get done. So, if you don’t get into Haas, don’t worry about that. I would just say kick butt in whatever you’re doing. That will come out in your resumes, it will come out in interviews, and that is ultimately what is going to get you the job.

*Anything else?*

Take Susan Berston’s Business 101 class. One thing I would definitively recommend to everybody is to take Susan Berston’s Business 101. I got a lot out of it, it was really transformative, and she is a great lady.