

Alumni Spotlight



Megan Ward (Asset Manager at Morgan Stanley, M.S. in Real Estate `17)

When I first graduated from New York University in 2012, I knew that I had an interest in real estate but I would have never guessed that it would bring me to where I am today. As an undergraduate, I majored in Psychology and minored in Economics with the goal of ultimately attending law school. My first job as a real estate and litigation paralegal helped me to confirm my interest in real estate but also made me realize that there were other avenues in the industry that might be worth pursuing.

Three years after completing my bachelor's degree, I decided that I wanted to invest in real estate finance as my career so I applied for the master's program at Baruch College. I knew that I wanted to stay in New York City and continue working full-time so the MS program felt like a great fit for me. The course load was diversified enough to allow me to explore different real estate topics all while establishing a foundation of financial knowledge that my undergraduate coursework had lacked.

Looking back at my experience at Baruch, I realize that one of the greatest assets of the MS program was the people. Most, if not all, of my professors had extensive careers in the real estate industry and were able to inject real experiences and examples into their teaching. Furthermore, a huge advantage to graduate programs such as the MS program at Baruch is the diversity of the student body. There were students that had just graduated with their undergraduate degrees, people that had a few years of work experience and others that already had 10+ years in the field. My classes were small enough that I was able to intimately interact with my classmates and learn about their diverse backgrounds and careers. For someone like me who began the program open-minded about the various career paths that I could take in real estate, these relationships with professors and students proved to be just as valuable as the content of my classes.

Ultimately the variety of classes and different perspectives from classmates and professors helped me to narrow down my interests and target specific jobs post-graduation. In my last semester, I ended up getting a job at Morgan Stanley as an Asset Manager in the Commercial Real Estate group. Two years later, I am still working in the same role at Morgan Stanley but now work out of our Dallas office. Working in asset management has proved to be the perfect fit for me. I'm able to leverage my paralegal experience as well as the real estate finance knowledge that I learned at Baruch. My day to day varies widely which keeps the job interesting. I can be analyzing leases, processing a construction draw or underwriting a property one day and outperforming a site inspection the next. Our portfolio is also very diversified geographically and by asset class so I am constantly learning and improving my knowledge of various markets and asset types.

I feel very fortunate to have found myself in the position that I'm in today. I know that my experience at Baruch played a pivotal role in getting me here and I am very grateful to the institution, staff, and all of my classmates for being a part of it.