SUPER SENIORS

ABLE TO LEAP TALL BARRIERS TO EMPLOYMENT
Jasmaine Seaberry finished her bachelor’s in communication with a concentration in public relations during the fall 2010 semester and received her degree at spring Commencement. Seaberry is the first in her family to earn a bachelor’s degree. She is also enrolled in the accelerated master’s program in the School of Communication in the College of Arts and Sciences, which means she will complete her master’s at the end of the fall 2011 semester.

Born and raised in Queens, N.Y., Seaberry never envisioned staying in the city. “It was time for me to get out, and the University of Hartford had everything I wanted. I knew I had to get my master’s to get a good job, and I love that I could get both degrees in five years—plus my mother loved the campus.”

She worked hard all four years—as a resident advisor in the freshman complexes for the past three years, a member of the Public Relations Student Society of America, and a member of Women Against Rape and Sexual Assault—all while being on the Dean’s List. Last summer she was determined to get an internship. She started researching and sending out letters to every public relations company she could find in New York City.

“I never gave up and then something popped up,” Seaberry says. That something was an internship at a new public relations company on the Upper West Side, Cordelia Donovan, Inc. Seaberry’s persistence paid off. She interned there all summer and has a full-time position waiting for her in December when she finishes her master’s.

Sometimes networking is the answer both online and off. Clay Pipkin, a senior acoustical engineering major in the College of Engineering, Technology, and Architecture, was born and raised in Taiwan by his American parents. He came to the University of Hartford after a brief stay in India and six months in Arizona, where he learned to build a guitar. That experience made him realize that being an engineer and building things sounded like an interesting future.

While an undergraduate, Pipkin was a member of the student chapter of Engineers Without Borders and traveled to India several times to help build a clean-water system in a village there. As his time at the University was ending, he realized he had to buckle down and find a job.

“I went to Career Services on campus. They told me to post my résumé on LinkedIn [an online networking site],” says Pipkin. Sure enough, being on LinkedIn led to a job offer. “When I checked my e-mail later, I saw that not only was someone interested in my résumé, they had offered me a job if I interviewed with them.” That someone was Victoria Cerami ’81, an alumna of the University’s acoustics and music program, who owns Cerami & Associates, Inc., an acoustical, audiovisual, and technology design firm in New York City. Thanks to LinkedIn and an alumni link, Pipkin starts his new job in July.

Like Jasmaine Seaberry, James Ogwu knows the importance of an internship. A native of Nigeria who moved to Hartford at age 12, Ogwu, who was named a Hartford Scholar and received a half-tuition scholarship to the University, was determined to be active and successful while here. In addition to his studies, he worked campus jobs, including managing the Anchor Fund call center, tutoring in Hillyer College, and working at the library circulation desk.

Ogwu majored in both economics/finance and insurance in the Barney School of Business. His honors include membership in the Sigma Alpha Phi Honors Society and Alpha Lambda Delta Honors Society, being named to the President’s List and the Dean’s List, and being recognized as the University of Hartford outstanding student during the 2011 College Academic Day at the State Capitol. He was a member of the Barney Leadership Council, the Economics and Finance Society, and the Global Ambassadors Club, which seeks to increase intercultural understanding and awareness on campus.

For the past two years, Ogwu interned at UnitedHealthcare in Hartford, Conn., through Inroads, a national program that places talented minorities in corporate internships and helps them become leaders. He was offered a job at UnitedHealthcare after his internship.

“It’s so important to intern. I wish I had done it all four years,” says Ogwu, who will begin his new job in July. He was excited to graduate and start his career. “I’m working in a new department, so I don’t really know what to expect. But my eyes and hands are open to try new things.”

Their weapons are intelligence, achievement, confidence, perseverance, hard work, and promise. They use them to defeat the negatives in today’s job market—high unemployment, economic downturn, inflation, downsizing, and despair. As members of the Class of 2011, they offer the successes they have had in the classroom and their experiences in internships and study abroad opportunities to employers. And guess what: with a mix of preparation and determination, these new graduates are on the path to achieve their career dreams. Meet three examples of the Class That Could.