‘Job Shadow’ Spotlight

Student Begins Apartment Industry Career

The story of recent college graduate Gloria Cooper begins like that of thousands of other college students who aren’t sure what they want to do after graduation. She originally planned to pursue a career in human resources management after obtaining a bachelor’s degree in management from Bay State College in Boston, but a part-time job at a Boston apartment community and a job shadow experience with Corcoran Management Company convinced her that the apartment industry was where she wanted to be.

Gloria Cooper

Cooper first learned about the industry from her adviser, Elena Swaim. Swaim teaches business at Bay State and oversees a program with Boston’s Residential Housing Association to expose students to industry career opportunities by featuring speakers drawn from the association’s membership. Even though she wasn’t a student in the class, Cooper sat in on one of those classroom visits last spring. She listened to Cynthia Buckley, Corcoran’s Director of Sales and Marketing, and a representative from Equity Residential describe the many career opportunities that can be found in the apartment industry.

Soon after, Cooper applied for a job shadow experience at Corcoran. She was accepted and spent two days in June at Corcoran’s Weymouth Commons where she learned about the apartment industry and property management. In August, Cooper applied for and was hired as a part-time leasing consultant at Quincy Commons. That soon turned into a full-time position divided between two Corcoran communities.

“I want to take this as far as I possibly can,” she says. “I would like to become a property manager in the future or even do something in marketing.”

She advises other students who might be interested in an apartment industry career to obtain as much industry experience as they can. Internships and job shadow experiences are ways of demonstrating to potential employers that a student is serious about pursuing a career in the industry, she says.

“If you put the time and the effort into something, it will pay off,” Cooper says. “Don’t be afraid to take that extra step.”

More Than an Intern

Buckley says Corcoran frequently uses internships as a recruitment tool and has offered several former interns full-time positions. These new employees often start as leasing consultants, which is the same way Buckley started in the industry more than 20 years ago.

“What’s great about internships is that they give the student a chance to sample us, and we also get to sample them and their skills,” she says.

Whether they’re recent college graduates or just new to the apartment industry, many job applicants are surprised to learn about the wide variety of job opportunities offered by the industry, Buckley says. Corcoran spends part of its interview process educating applicants about the types of jobs available.

“I have found that no matter where you recruit employees from—colleges or another industry—they almost have never heard of property management before,” she says.

In screening those applicants, Buckley says she looks for people with good organizational and time management skills. They also have to enjoy interacting with a wide variety of people and work well as a member of a team. She says she also always asks applicants about previous customer service experience and how they would handle an upset customer.

“Everyone we hire has had some sort of retail or hospitality industry experience at some point in their lives,” she says. “That’s key because our industry is built around providing excellent customer service.”

Swaim says even she was surprised about the industry’s focus on customer service. Like many, she thought renters just signed a lease and that was the end of it, she says. She didn’t realize the level of service provided—neither did her students, many of whom also don’t know of the wide variety of jobs offered by the industry, she says.

“Students are most surprised about all of the career opportunities that are available in the industry,” she says. “It’s a whole new area for them. They love it when they get into it—particularly if they are people-oriented.”

The Perfect Match

Working with Boston’s Residential Housing Association, Swaim matches Bay State College students with industry companies for job shadow experiences and internships. The program is being conducted through the college’s DECA chapter, which is a business student organization.

“It’s introducing students to a new career that they had never thought of before,” she says.

John Lafferty, Executive Director of the Rental Housing Association of the Greater Boston Real Estate Board, said Chestnut Hill Realty, Equity Residential, Roseland Property Company, Corcoran Management Company, HallKeen Management and Peabody Properties are participating in the program with Bay State, which includes

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Presented August 2012

Please join NAAEI in congratulating the following individuals who received their designations in August 2012.

National Apartment Leasing Professional (NALP)

Amber Day, CAS	TrashPro	Mount Laurel	NJ
Mike Flynn, CAS	EPIC Landscape	Gardner	KS
Valerie Glassford, CAS	The Emlin Group	Fort Washington	PA
Gary Klingensmith, CAS	M & G Home Solutions	Belton	MO
Michael Reynolds, CAS	Touch of Color (Floor Pro)	Harrisburg	PA

National Apartment Leasing Professional (NALP)

Erin Alterman, NALP	Perimeter Realty	Jacksonville	FL
Valerie Contreras, NALP	Integrity Asset Management	El Paso	TX
Britan Dreyer, NALP	The Orchard	Austin	TX
Anamaria Durus, NALP		Fort Worth	TX
Andrew Gismondi, NALP	The Galman Group	Jenkintown	PA
Jessica Hansen, NALP	Nat'l Development of New England	Burlington	MA
Bill Heroman, NALP	Price Realty	Arlington	TX
Amanda Janda, NALP	St. Augustine at the Lake	Jacksonville	FL
Leanne Lacroix, NALP	Randcor Management	Atlantic Beach	FL
Donna Monteleone, NALP	1st Lake	Metairie	LA
Kimberly O'Keefe, NALP	The Dolben Company	Saugus	MA

Certificate for Apartment Maintenance Technicians (CAMT)

Juan Acevedo, CAMT	Kent Street	Somerville	MA
Dana Avaritt, CAMT	Morgan Properties	King of Prussia	PA
Jeffrey Bortner, CAMT	Indigo at Batram Park	Jacksonville	FL
Darius Bourne, CAMT	Walker Mews	Baltimore	MD
Stephen Brown, CAMT	Hatfield Village	Hatfield	PA
David Chapman, CAMT	Billingsley Company	Allen	TX
Wesley Chisolm, CAMT		Rockville	MD
Ernest Cribari, CAMT	The Brook at Colonial Park	Harrisburg	PA
Cory Daniels, CAMT	Pablo Towers	Jacksonville Beach	FL
Chris Figueroa, CAMT	Hatfield Village	Hatfield	PA
Brian Gingrich, CAMT	Morgan Properties	Leola	PA
Dereje Gizaw, CAMT		Silver Spring	MD
James Golston, CAMT	Timberlake	East Norriton	PA
Steve Joseph, CAMT	Colony at Deerwood	Jacksonville	FL
Miranda Joshua, CAMT		Frisco	TX

Michael Kemper, CAMT	JC Hart Company	Noblesville	IN
David Lamancusa, CAMT	Morgan Properties	King of Prussia	PA
Jeffrey Miluski, CAMT	Property Management	Lemoyne	PA
Adolfo Negron Jr., CAMT	Reside Living	Chicago	IL
Brian Peloquin, CAMT	Columbia Residential	Atlanta	GA
Bruce Reams, CAMT	Vintage At Plantation Bay	Jacksonville	FL
Rene Reyna, CAMT	Reside Living	Chicago	IL
Taylor Robinson, CAMT	Vineyard Apartments	Bedford	TX
Thomas Shekalus Sr., CAMT	Morgan Properties	King of Prussia	PA
Arthur Sykes CAMT	Preserve At St. Nicholas	Jacksonville	FL
Arturo Trejo-Soto, CAMT	Coronado Terrace	San Diego	CA
Raymond Waller, CAMT	Dutch Point	Hartford	CT
Dan Watson, CAMT	Morgan Properties	King of Prussia	PA
Thomas White, CAMT	Overlook Apartments	Denver	CO
Randy Yaw, CAMT	Pablow Towers	Jacksonville Beach	FL
Chanthou Yi, CAMT	Charter Landing	Jacksonville	FL

Certified Apartment Portfolio Supervisor (CAPS)

DeAnn Brown, CAM, CAPS		Matthews	NC
Mandi Grogan, CAM, CAPS	Cambridge Square Greenwood	Greenwood	IN
Zack Gyler, CAPS	Gyler Gyler & Barrad Property	Arlington	TX
Shareca Heath, CAM, CAPS	Victoria Park	Charlotte	NC
Tammi Kitz, CAM, CAPS	Southern Property Associates	Indian Trail	NC
Jenna Krantz, CAM, CAPS	Colonial Properties	Charlotte	NC
Lindsay Link, NALP, CAM, CAPS	Paddock at Springfield	Fort Mill	SC
Kristen McLaughlin, CAPS	Scully Company	Jenkintown	PA
Jennifer Meador, NALP, CAM, CAPS	Sundance Station	Richmond	VA
Bob Moore, CAM, CAPS		Charlotte	NC
Jeff Netherton, CAPS		Charlotte	NC

Stacia Phifer, CAM, CAPS	Alpha Mill Apartments	Charlotte	NC
Veronica Porras-Nunez, CAPS	Churchill Residential	Irving	TX
Vineta Pritchard, CAM, CAPS	Flats at Mallard Creek	Charlotte	NC
Darcy Quintanilla, CAM, CAPS	Marquis Management	Grand Prairie	TX
Mandi Radillo, CAM, CAPS		Mooresville	NC
Greg Seagle, CAPS		Charlotte	NC
Lisa Stackenwalt, CAM, CAPS		Matthews	NC
Matthew Sugg, CAM, CAPS	PRG Real Estate Management	Henrico	VA
Blake Thomas, CAM, CAPS		Chester	SC
Melina Velasquez, CAM, CAPS	Wilton Companies	Richmond	VA
Jennifer Westerman, CAPS	Capitol Asset Mgmt	Richmond	VA
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Tim Avant, CAM		San Diego	CA
Meagan Baker, CAM	54 Magnolia at Deerwood	Jacksonville	FL
Nathan Boates, CAM	Cedar Crest Apartments	San Angelo	TX
Autumn Chance, CAM	Stone Mill Apartments	Cartersville	GA
Dana Cinq-Mars, CAM	Pines at Carolina Place	Pineville	NC
Brandi Donaldson, CAM	The Catalyst	Charlotte	NC
Deborah Earnest, CAM	Campbell Crossing	Fort Campbell	KY
Elizabeth Frank, NALP, CAM		Stewartsville	NJ
April Fulghum, CAM	Fairfield Property Mgmt.	Shreveport	LA
Jennifer Hackman, CAM	Camden Cedar Lakes	Troy	MO

Lawrence Hall, CAM	Camden Property Trust	Las Vegas	NV
Jill Inchausty, CAM	Wampold Companies	Baton Rouge	LA
Becky Keen, CAM	Shadowood Apartments	Chapel Hill	NC
Sung-jin Lee, CAM	Technical State University	Greensboro	NC
Megan Mares, CAM	Windsail Apartments	Tulsa	OK
Matt Pardue, CAM	Pardue Asset Management	Dallas	TX
William Rounds, CAM	Utah Investors Realty	Sandy	UT
Damon Scott, CAM	Evergreens at Mount Mariah	Durham	NC
Stephanie Sherman, CAM	Lion's Crossing	State College	PA
Andrea Soffietti, CAM	Marquette Management	Palatine	IL
Sharon Sulton, CAM	Milestone Management	Benbrook	TX
Lionel Villalta, CAM	New Horizon Village	High Point	NC

on-campus career presentations, job shadowing experiences and internships.

"This is a huge industry, yet there is very low awareness among young people entering the job market," he says. "There is a need for the apartment industry to heighten the awareness about the available career opportunities."

The apartment industry is always looking for motivated, curious self-starters coming out of college, he says. It's an ideal fit for recent college graduates because a junior-level person who is dedicated and works hard can quickly move up the ranks of the apartment industry and gain increasingly greater responsibilities.

Lafferty says he hopes the program with Bay State gives students the chance to see the apartment industry as an attractive career path, as well as provide an opportunity for mentorships and networking connections to develop between college students and industry professionals.

Contact NAAEI to learn more about putting together your own job shadow and internship programs for college students. Meanwhile, the 2013 Apartment Careers Month is right around the corner in February. Learn how you can participate by visiting ApartmentCareerHQ.org or taking a look at the resources available on our website at www.naahq.org/education.

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