

Adam Richardson

"There is always a new problem to solve, a new trend, and new data to look at," says 2011 UMSL graduate Adam Richardson about the field of data science and analytics. Adam's interest in data science has led him to employment at the Centene Corporation, a multiline healthcare enterprise that provides health coverage, including dental and pharmaceutical plans, to clients. Within Centene, Adam is the manager of data science and advanced analytics. His work involves analyzing and interpreting data and building predictive models to provide data. Adam then advises the business on making future decisions based on the insights that the data provide.

A participant in the BS/MA dual degree program that allows students to earn two degrees in just five years, Adam graduated from UMSL with a Bachelor of Science in Economics, a Master of Arts in economics, and a certificate from the Pierre LaCede Honors College. Adam highly recommends the economics department at UMSL and their dual degree program, which helped prepare him to begin his career immediately after graduation.

Adam attributes much of his success to the quality of classes at UMSL, particularly those in the Honors College. His quantitative coursework in economics taught him to skillfully problem solve, while the Honors College coursework helped him become a better writer and improved his ability to convey ideas, something which has been very useful in his career. "A lot of what I do is analyzing data and solving problems, but I have to tell the story of why it matters, so the writing and comprehension skills are very useful." Adam liked the small classes, comradery,

and friendly environment that encourages students to think outside of standard course guidelines. In his opinion, the open discussion is very similar to the business world, with seminar classes being more like miniature versions of a board room than a standard classroom. The professors made themselves very available to the student body and there was never a disjoint between students and teachers. Adam noticed that the Honors College felt "kind of big group of friends and family all learning together."

Adam knows from experience that students seeking success in data science and analytics should keep an open mind regarding classes and jobs. The field of data science and analytics is widely spread across many disciplines and has a lot of varied career opportunities. While earning his degree, Adam specifically wanted a career in quantitative finance, but after working as an intern with the Centene Corporation, he realized that he enjoys working in healthcare. Adam also advises students not to discount the value of liberal arts, communication, and business classes because "in analytics you want to be able to help others understand the data and those courses will help prepare you."

As also mentioned by Quahana Hendree (see page 6) the constant changes and expansion of UMSL's campus have not gone unnoticed by Adam. Adam specifically noted the construction of the new Recreation and Wellness Center along with the development of other buildings on campus. He believes that the Great Streets Project has also improved Natural Bridge Road and created a more welcoming environment. Even with his busy career, Adam makes

time to remain actively involved in alumni activities and has nothing but fond memories of his time in economics and the Honors College. ■



Left to Right: Daphne Houston (BS 1996), Leader, Shopper/Category Insights & Training, Energizer
Kenny Schmied (BS/MA 2009), Founder and CEO, Media Next
Adam Richardson (BS/MA 2011), Health Economics Analyst, Centene Corporation