

# I'M READY FOR THIS

## NORTHEAST GRADUATE BECOMES ACCOUNTABLE TO NORFOLK CPA FIRM

As one of eight children, Morgan Haner has a full understanding of what it takes to manage the family's finances. Her financial literacy has allowed her to pursue a career working in an industry that utilizes the concepts, definitions, terminologies, and methods of operating an accounting system she learned in college.

Haner has built a solid foundation of accounting knowledge after earning an Associate of Applied Science degree in Accounting from Northeast Community College in May 2021. Working with numbers has been an area where Haner has excelled, coming at an early age at home in Sterling, Nebraska, located 50 miles southeast of Lincoln.

"Raising eight kids is difficult, especially financially. I saw that as the oldest child, I wanted to help my parents and do something about it and help manage it. That's how I got my foot in the water to pursue business administration."

Haner chose Northeast after a friend who graduated from the institution told her she needed to check out the college after describing how nice the Norfolk campus is. The friend said the instructors are knowledgeable and that they really want to see their students succeed.

"So that sparked my interest, and I came here," Haner said. "Northeast is set up like a four-year campus and it has all the services to help anyone succeed. It's awesome!"



The Northeast accounting program prepares students for immediate employment in entry-level positions or graduates can transfer their credits to an accounting program at a four-year college or university.

At Northeast, Haner said she appreciated the real-life projects she and her classmates participated in such as preparing W-2 wage and tax forms and employee paychecks. The exercises demonstrated what they could expect when they would get into the workplace. She said she appreciated how her instructors incorporated such assignments into the curriculum.

"They helped by answering our questions. Sometimes it's not always clear what the business rules are as they are always changing. Staying on top is very important," she said. "So, for the instructors to have been able to answer the questions we had was very helpful."

While she focused on her education, Haner also pursued an opportunity outside the classroom to participate in internships with two accounting firms in Norfolk – Professional Accounting Solutions and McMill CPAs & Advisors.

"I saw the job opening at Professional Accounting Solutions on Indeed and went in for the interview and she gave me the job on the spot, which was so nice."

Haner completed that internship and then moved to McMill CPAs & Advisors where she interned in the Payroll Department. She said she enjoyed the projects she was assigned, especially those where she worked with clients as she walked them through the process and helped them realize how their service can be an asset to their business.

Sheila Ridgeway, payroll department manager at McMill, said the firm gives interns the best possible experience as employees exposing them to many areas such as sales taxes

and processes and allowing them to help prepare W-2 and 1099 forms for clients each January. She said Haner was the company's first intern – a decision she is glad they made.

"When they asked if we would like an intern, we said, 'Sure. She can file and do things like that.' Well, Morgan came in very knowledgeable of payroll," Ridgeway said. "I was very impressed at how well she understood things like withholding, garnishments and other areas. She is very well rounded as far as computer knowledge, spreadsheets and things like that. She learned a lot at Northeast, and she has brought those skills to the table at McMill."

Ridgeway said the talents Haner has brought in have surpassed many of their applicants. She said her arrival came at an opportune time as another person in Payroll moved into the Accounting Department, which created an opening for Haner to become employed with the firm full-time immediately upon graduation. She is pleased to have Haner in the office as a Payroll Accountant.

"I have been very impressed with her work as she asks very good questions," Ridgeway said. "I'm pretty good at saying, 'Good job and nice catch' when she discovers something in her work."

Haner credits her time in college for preparing her for the rigors of the workplace in terms of time management, relationship building and management skills. In addition to classroom hours, she participated in softball and volleyball, served as an accounting tutor, and was a member of TRIO Student Support Services, which named her its Student of the Month in February 2021.

Haner describes her experiences away from home as a real eye opener and is pleased how Northeast Community College has guided her as she continues to pursue her dreams. She has a leveled-headed approach that any employer would desire.

"I've always been kind of independent. I've always been given responsibility roles in my life. So, coming here was honestly a piece of cake. I know a lot of people can't say that, but I told myself once I graduate, 'I'm ready for this.'"