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ISM 6002- Dr. LaBrie

Career Field Landscape Response

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**Response to the Career Field Landscape Modules**

**Prior Familiarity**  
Starting this graduate program at Seattle Pacific University, I had a surface-level understanding of data analytics, primarily shaped by general ideas about the field's growth potential, competitive salary, and technical requirements. My initial coursework, Intro to Data Analytics, Ethics and Christian Values in the Marketplace, and Managerial Communications, introduced me to the technical and ethical basics. However, the Career Field Landscape modules and Dr. Karns' interviews provided a broader and more complex picture of what it takes to succeed in data analytics.

I have learned that success in this field goes beyond technical skill and involves building a balance between analytical rigor, effective communication, and the ability to work collaboratively across departments. This last point was especially surprising, as I had initially thought of data analytics as a solitary field focused on individual technical tasks. Dr. Karns’ interviews with professionals and alums highlighted how essential data analysts are to work with various teams, aligning their findings with organizational needs and making their insights accessible to non-technical stakeholders.

**Surprises**  
One aspect that truly surprised me was the emphasis on data storytelling. I had assumed that my job as a data analyst would focus on interpreting raw data, but I now understand that communicating insights effectively to diverse audiences is equally important. Data analysts are often tasked with building a narrative that shows what the data says, why it matters, and how it can drive business decisions. This has pushed me to think about how my background in communication can be an asset and how I can further hone these skills to become a compelling storyteller with data.

The interview with the international alumni was also deeply insightful. As an international student myself, I resonated with their challenges and felt reassured by their strategies for navigating the U.S. job market. I am eager to continue learning about the nuances of finding employment in the U.S., especially the unique obstacles international students face. I now feel more curious about how I can stand out, what specific networks I can tap into, and which skills are most valued by companies willing to sponsor international hires.

**Excitement About the Field:**  
I am particularly excited by the continuous learning that data analytics demands. The field is dynamic, with new tools and techniques emerging frequently. I’m motivated by the opportunity to keep learning and improving, knowing that my skill set will need to evolve to stay relevant. The Career Field Landscape modules underscored this by emphasizing the need to develop a portfolio and continuously update skills. This aligns with my curiosity and natural inclination toward lifelong learning, motivating me to seek resources and stay current with industry trends actively.

Additionally, data analytics allows me to bridge my communication skills with technical analysis, creating insights that are not only accurate but meaningful. I am eager to bring my unique perspective to the field and look forward to the opportunity to communicate complex data insights to drive decision-making and add real value to the organizations I work with.

**Personal Connection**  
I see data as a powerful tool for bridging gaps and solving real-world problems. Coming from a communication and leadership background, I feel that I can contribute to data analytics by translating complex findings into actionable insights. I also find personal alignment with the ethical considerations discussed in my coursework. In my previous roles, I valued transparency and integrity, and I see data analytics as a field that benefits immensely from these principles. I am drawn to using data to support responsible, ethical practices in businesses and communities.

**High-Impact Potential**  
The modules emphasized the potential of data analytics to positively impact sectors like healthcare, education, and public policy. This idea resonates with my desire to do work that contributes to society. Knowing that data can be used for social good motivates me to pursue this field seriously. I see data analytics as a way to make informed decisions that can genuinely improve people's lives through smarter resource allocation in healthcare or enhanced educational outcomes. By adhering to the ethical principles I am learning, I hope to contribute positively and help guide organizations in ethical and socially responsible directions.

***Job Readiness Assessment***

**1. Data Analyst II - Redfin (Seattle, WA)**

[*Data Analyst II - Hybrid - SEA at Redfin*](https://www.ziprecruiter.com/c/Redfin-Corporation/Job/Data-Analyst-II-Hybrid-SEA-or-ATL/-in-Seattle%2CWA?jid=8eb23fef6651337c)

**Responsibilities:**

* Utilize diverse data sources to synthesize insights that support business decisions.
* Collaborate with cross-functional teams to develop data-driven strategies.
* Communicate findings effectively to stakeholders.

**Requirements:**

* Advanced skills in SQL and Excel.
* Proficiency with data visualization tools, particularly Tableau.
* Strong analytical and problem-solving abilities.
* Effective communication skills for presenting complex insights.

***Current Readiness***  
So far, I have completed three courses in my program: Intro to Data Analytics, Ethics and Christian Values in the Marketplace, and Managerial Communications. These courses have introduced me to foundational concepts in analytics and developed my communication skills, which will aid in presenting insights to stakeholders. I also have basic skills in Excel, which will be formally assessed before the end of this quarter through an Excel exam. However, I do not yet have current SQL skills and no hands-on experience with Tableau or advanced data visualization.

***Future Development Plan***  
To prepare for this role, my upcoming SPU courses will provide essential training in SQL, data analysis, and data visualization. **ISM 6212 - Database Management and Warehousing** will enhance my SQL skills, covering advanced querying and data manipulation techniques, which are key to Redfin’s data handling requirements. **BUS 6171 - Statistics for Business Decisions** will also strengthen my analytical skills, focusing on statistical analysis and problem-solving techniques. My program also includes a capstone project, where I will apply my SQL and analytical skills to real-world data scenarios. While my program does not include Tableau, I will independently take an online Tableau course and use public datasets to build a portfolio of interactive visualizations, addressing this skill gap.

**2. Data Scientist - Microsoft (Redmond, WA)**

[*Data Scientist - Redmond at Microsoft*](https://jobs.careers.microsoft.com/global/en/job/1748505/Data-Scientist---Redmond)

**Responsibilities:**

* Develop and implement machine learning models to solve business problems.
* Analyze large datasets to extract actionable insights.
* Collaborate with engineering and product teams to integrate data-driven solutions.

**Requirements:**

* Proficiency in programming languages such as Python or R.
* Experience with machine learning algorithms and frameworks.
* Strong statistical analysis skills.
* Ability to communicate technical concepts to non-technical stakeholders.

***Current Readiness***  
With the courses I have completed so far, I lack the technical skills in Python, R, and machine learning that are essential for this role. However, my communication background prepares me well for presenting complex technical concepts in an accessible way, which is beneficial for collaboration and explaining insights to non-technical stakeholders.

***Future Development Plan***  
To acquire the technical skills needed for this position, my SPU program includes **ISM 6353 - Programming for Data Analytics: Python Machine Learning**, which will introduce me to Python programming and basic machine learning frameworks. Additionally, **ISM 6354 - Programming for Data Analytics: R** will provide training in R, adding versatility to my programming skill set. **BUS 6171 - Statistics for Business Decisions** will further strengthen my statistical analysis skills, covering regression analysis, predictive analytics, and hypothesis testing, all of which are valuable for a data scientist role. To gain more practical experience with machine learning, I will complete supplementary courses and practice on platforms like Kaggle. I plan to document these projects in a portfolio showcasing my technical skills and analytical abilities.

**Conclusion:** My SPU program provides a comprehensive foundation in SQL, Python, statistics, and data analysis, which will equip me with many of the core skills needed for roles at Redfin and Microsoft. To bridge gaps, I’ll proactively study Tableau and R independently and build a portfolio highlighting my data visualization and machine learning skills. I am confident I will be prepared for these data-focused roles by completing this program and dedicating time to independent learning.