



## Asia Leath

### 2014 Scholarship Recipient



Asia Leath, Cohort of 2014

*“I didn’t really expect to find myself on this path. I don’t have anything set in stone.”*

As a rising senior at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro (UNCG), Asia recalls feeling unsure about her college prospects—even as valedictorian of D.C.’s IDEA Public Charter School. While weighing her ever-changing academic interests, Asia originally pursued a bachelor’s degree in mathematics, before finding herself at home with communication studies and a minor in business. She strongly believes in “tailoring” curriculum to fit one’s interests and strengths. A self-professed writer on the side, Asia has completed a fiction novel and has co-authored an article for the Center for Creative Leadership, entitled *“Spoon, Fork, or Knife: What Leadership Skills Should I Bring to the Table?”* (2017).

Harboring a strong interest in marketing and an eye for analysis, Asia applied to the Economic Club’s summer internship program in 2016 and was matched with Accenture, a company she wasn’t familiar with. “This was my first real position outside of school,” Asia says, noting that her first few weeks at Accenture’s D.C. office—where she was a management consulting intern—were hectic. To better prepare herself, Asia diligently spent time outside of the office catching up on project details and orienting herself with Accenture’s mission and goals. Though she felt pressured to adjust to Accenture’s fast-paced environment—and its equally fast-paced director—she ultimately became very fond of both.

*“He [Marty Rodgers] was always challenging me; getting me ready for the mindset required for the job. He had very specific tasks. One time, when we were at a networking event, he asked me to go out and grab 5 business cards. He’d also throw questions at me, like ‘how many refugees are displaced in the world?’ At first, the questions were so hard to predict. But I see now that he was directly challenging me; getting me out of my comfort zone. Today, I would tell him that I appreciate the challenges that he and Accenture have given me. He let me know that [...] I can do great things with this company. Whenever he used to see me, he’d give me a handshake—now, it’s a warm hug.”*

Asia also credits her success at Accenture to her supervisors, Sean Burke and Lekha Ragavendran, both of whom fulfilled mentor roles and provided her with the “constant feedback” she needed. “When I’m in unfamiliar situations, I tend to be more of a listener,” Asia says, noting that on her first review, her supervisors indicated she could improve upon her communication skills, a revelation she now considers “really ironic, because communication studies is [her] major!” In August of 2017, Asia completed her second summer internship with Accenture and has been offered a full-time job with Accenture Federal intended for post-graduation.

Until then, Asia is focused on completing her final year at UNCG, a university she believes has given her opportunities to be more introspective.

*“I felt pressured to go to college. Schoolwork was all I focused on up until high school, so I wanted nothing to do with it afterwards. In college, I faced new challenges every year [time management issues, difficult courses, etc]. It wasn’t until I beat those challenges that I realized that I love learning.”*

Sophomore year turned out to be a transformative year for Asia, who made it her “personal goal” to not just graduate—but to excel. She found her place at Lambda Pi Eta (LPH)—the National Communication Association’s honor society—and is slated to graduate magna cum laude.

UNCG is also where Asia discovered that being surrounded by people “fuels her,” and she contemplates why she ever considered herself to be an introvert, before realizing that it was an inference made from her quiet, sheltered childhood. Believing that “it [an introvert] was all [she] was allowed to be,” Asia was drawn to colleges with intimate environments. A last-minute scramble resulted in her—the valedictorian of IDEA Public Charter School—being without a prospective college, a situation she later found comedic in its irony. With the guidance of Linda Larson, the Economic Club’s scholarship coordinator, Asia applied and was accepted to UNCG. The decision was so last-minute that, according to her, “my tuition was due the week after I got my acceptance letter.”

Since receiving the David M. Rubenstein/Economic Club of Washington, D.C. Scholarship and participating in the internship program, Asia has also had positive experiences as an alumni. Of the Economic Club’s Alumni Reconnect event—in which she interacted with fellow alumni and members such as Brad Flickinger (senior managing director of CBRE) and Ximena Hartsock (founder and president of Phone2Action, Inc.)—Asia says, “It was fulfilling to belong to something and connect with others.” She also hopes to be increasingly engaged in alumni directed programs, such as those devoted to organizing seminars for undergraduate scholars.

When asked about her future goals, Asia says she has plans to obtain a MBA. “I have a yearning to learn the field of marketing. I want to be in a leadership position one day.” Right now, she is focused on going through her final year at UNCG, which she says is “going to be a mental challenge, since I have a tendency to look from A right to Z. I’m always focusing and preparing for what’s ahead of me.”

Headstrong and a task-oriented, Asia has embarked on an academic and professional journey that has led her to conclude that “as you go into a situation, don’t expect yourself to be perfect. Allow yourself to learn.” And as she writes in her article,

*“Great leaders need excellent communication skills, integrity, and an open mind to learning as they lead. Leaders accept that they don’t know it all, and will adapt to new situations. In any and every situation, great leaders are versatile leaders.”*

*To learn more about the Economic Club’s Education Initiatives, contact [education@economicclub.org](mailto:education@economicclub.org)*