

McDonough School of Business
Net Impact Chat
December 7, 2009

Neel_MBA2010

Hi. My name is Neel Master -- I am a second-year student in the Georgetown MBA program. I am the Co-President of Georgetown Net Impact. Before joining the program, I did nonprofit management and strategy consulting here in Washington. This summer, I worked at American Express as an internal strategy consultant, and I'll be returning there full-time next year. I'm looking forward to answering your questions about Georgetown MBA, Net Impact and social management, and consulting!

Katie_MBA2011

Hi. My name is Katie Heffner. I am a first-year student in the Georgetown MBA program. I am the elected Co-President for Net Impact. Prior to Georgetown, I worked in consulting for The Cadmus Group for three years doing program development and social marketing for EPA; Indoor Environments Division. I am originally from Arlington, VA, and received my undergraduate degree in business from William and Mary. I look forward to answering your questions about social impact at Georgetown!

Lisa_MBA2011

Hi. My name is Lisa Stratton. I am a first-year student in the Georgetown MBA program. Prior to Georgetown, I worked in marketing at Ten Thousand Villages, a nonprofit fair trade retail organization, for four years. I am originally from Greenbelt, Maryland and I received my undergraduate degree in international studies from the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill. I am currently an active member of the Net Impact, Marketing and Emerging Markets clubs. I'm also on the board of the Jewish Business Alliance, and am responsible for planning Israel Trek (an on campus career fair with local Israeli companies). This summer, I am looking for marketing and/or international development internship opportunities. I look forward to answering your questions about Georgetown!

Robin_MBA2010

Hi. My name is Robin Deliso and I am a 2nd year student in the Georgetown MBA program. I am one of the outgoing Net Impact Co-Presidents (served all of this past year with Neel, also on this chat today). Prior to Georgetown, I worked in nonprofit marketing/consulting for 4 years here in DC. I am originally from Cape Cod, MA, and received a BA in English from Dartmouth College. This summer, I interned at Stonewall Kitchen, a specialty food company, focusing on brand management/marketing. I am very interested in the intersection of brands, corporate responsibility, consumer behavior and marketing. I look forward to answering your questions about Net Impact, marketing, and everything else in between!

Robin_MBA2010

To maximize our time, maybe we'll start by telling you a bit about Net Impact at MSB (feel free to jump in!)

Robin_MBA2010

Net Impact has over 140 members this year

Robin_MBA2010

We just sent 40+ people to the national Net Impact conference in Ithaca

Dan B

I was curious about the Net Impact program. I've heard from a variety of schools of how significant the group is, can one of you talk about WHY this group is so important to MBA students?

Robin_MBA2010

For those of you that don't know, Net Impact is a chapter of a larger international organization www.netimpact.org

Jessica

Hi, I was wondering how social enterprise is integrated into the curriculum - it seems that electives in social enterprise/CSR, etc. are siloed by discipline.

Robin_MBA2010

Our club website: <http://netimpact.gumbaclub.org/>

jen

How old is Net Impact (NI) at MSB? Are there a lot of students in NI who are NOT going into non-profit work?

Robin_MBA2010

NI at MSB was one of the charter members of national NI -- we're at least 10 years old?

Robin_MBA2010

Only 6-7% of graduating students pursue "non-profit" careers

beccbrown

Hi Robin, thank you for chatting with us today. I was wondering if you could talk about if and how Net Impact focuses on the intersection of environmental issues and business, whether it is businesses that are directly oriented towards the environment, or how all businesses can positively contribute.

Neel_MBA2010

Dan and Jessica -- thanks for your questions. Dan, I think the reason Net Impact is so important to MBAs is 1) traditional MBAs want to find ways to do well and do good, and 2) nonprofits, government agencies, and international development orgs are demanding more and more MBA talent, which means more students with these interests are coming into MBA programs...

Robin_MBA2010

Net Impact spans students that want full-blown int'l development careers, nonprofit mgmt, CSR officer, environment, etc.

Neel_MBA2010

Jessica, re: curriculum, we have 2 core courses and about 8 electives focused on social and environmental themes.

Robin_MBA2010

But also 100% encompasses students working in the corporate world (I-bankers, Jeff Immelts-in-training, mgmt consultants, listen up!!) who want to keep an eye toward board service, responsible investing, incorporating CSR into a company, etc.

Neel_MBA2010

Additionally, NI themes are sometimes woven into some of our core courses -- for instance, the core marketing just featured a Bottom of the Pyramid case...

Robin_MBA2010

These issues are too big not to pay attention to in our time.

Dan

I had heard that some schools have more than 50% participation in NI... and surely not all of them go directly into government, environment, or non-profit work?

Lisa_MBA2011

Students are eligible to take language courses from Georgetown University, but those courses are not through the business school. Language credits don't count toward your graduation requirements for MSB.

Katie_MBA2011

Hi Beccbrown, I can help out on this one. Net Impact focuses on using business skills for social impact - whether or not the business as a whole is focused on the issue. A good example is GE. I would recommend checking out of its website. We find a number of people interested in non-profit and environmental issues, but a large portion also intend to join companies and apply social/environmental impact once they get there.

Robin_MBA2010

It's something that is a part of our era and especially in light of the way MBAs are viewed these days (thank you, financial crisis, Madoff, etc.), getting more involved in anything related to ethical business and using business to promote positive social change = essential.

jen

So what kinds of things does NI do at MSB (programs, bringing speakers to campus, etc.)?

Jessica

Are there specific professors that are dedicated to CSR and social enterprise, or have done work in the field?

nikhil

Besides curriculum, what support do you find at Georgetown for careers in social enterprise?

Robin_MBA2010

Also, consider the fact that most prominent leaders are hugely involved in their companies, but also in board service, charitable causes....and oftentimes their orgs are CSR leaders.

Lisa_MBA2011

NI has a lot of programs throughout the year. At the beginning of the year we had social impact week, which featured a variety of guest speakers from organizations such as the Gates Foundation. We also had a full Net Impact Day with panel speakers from a variety of industries and companies such as JP Morgan, Coke Enterprises, The One Campaign, PSI, etc...

Neel_MBA2010

Jessica -- yes. We have several faculty focusing on these areas: Bill Novelli, former CEO of AARP and Tobacco-Free Kids, teaches nonprofit mgmt, CSR. Alan Andreason, one of the founders of social marketing, teaches Social Marketing, Social Management. Ed Soule, a leader in CSR, teaches core ethics and sponsors independent studies in CSR (I'm in one now), and Jeff Reid is focused on entrepreneurship with an emphasis on social entrepreneurship.

Katie_MBA2011

Bouncing off what Robin just said, we highlight the fact that anyone interested in business can also join the club. For finance folks, we talk about microfinance and how social responsibility influences industry and investments. As far as consulting, I just worked for a for-profit company doing consulting on social marketing. For marketing, there are a lot of efforts being done by Wal-Mart, GE, etc.

Lisa_MBA2011

Net Impact also sponsors a program called Board Fellows, which places students on local nonprofit boards to work on strategic projects.

Dan

So, could one say that NI is the natural MBA counterpart to undergraduate community service organizations?

Julia

Do a lot of students go into careers in nonprofit or government fields after graduation?

Neel_MBA2010

Hi Nikhil. Re: careers in social enterprise, they tend to fall into a couple of key buckets: international development (the biggest here at Gtown), government/nonprofit, and CSR. We have recruiting partnerships in all of these areas, and a particular strength in international development...

Katie_MBA2011

We are using business skills for social and environmental impact. MBA Volunteers, another club here, focuses on service. A lot of the club is doing for-profit work on the upcoming "green" movement.

Maureen

I would be looking to make a transition from a traditional management background to a career focused on the social impact of business - do you find that the experience at MSB and involvement in NI positions students well to make this kind of career change?

Robin_MBA2010

Hi Julia, only about 6-7% go into nonprofit/gov't here (combined). Of course, that doesn't count international development-related careers OR people that go to Deloitte/Booz and work in the federal practice, which technically counts as private sector.

Robin_MBA2010

Georgetown is a GREAT place to get an MBA because you are learning business but are so close to DC/government and can really get and understanding of how business-government-nonprofits interact

Katie_MBA2011

Rahul, the incoming co-president with me, is transitioning from a traditional career to involve one with more social impact.

Julia

Robin, how useful is your career center in helping you find those jobs?

Robin_MBA2010

Hi Julia, We actually have 2 VPs on our board dedicated to helping career mgmt find these opportunities, so I'd say there is definitely extra support here!

Robin_MBA2010

Last spring, we posted an average of 3 "Net Impact jobs" per week in our newsletter

Maureen

Robin that is one reason MSB is so high on my list - all that DC has to offer in that respect and Georgetown's reputation for focusing on a global perspective

Robin_MBA2010

Within Career Mgmt, they are very helpful in trying to help you hone your 'NI search' -- since NI comprises so many different career interests

Noreen Okarter

Hi Neel, Katie, Robin, and Lisa - What regions of the world does Net Impact focus on the most in terms of its speaker events and other initiatives? I know Georgetown has a global program, but how much attention is given to social responsibility here in the US vs. other regions (e.g. Africa, Asia, Latin America)? Thanks!

Robin_MBA2010

Truthfully, anyone regardless of where you go is going to need to do a little 'choose your own adventure' when it comes to finding the perfect Net Impact career fit

Lisa_MBA2011

Julia - we have had a number of government agencies come on campus for recruiting sessions. The FBI, State Department, OPIC, CIA, Department of Defense, Dept. of Energy, etc... have all come on campus to recruit

Katie_MBA2011

Well, we have a club called "Clean Tech" specifically dedicated to that issue. They bring in a number of speakers (from DOE and more). Especially with the new administration, the issue is a hot topic here in DC.

Lisa_MBA2011

The recruitment process for nonprofit organizations tends to be more "just in time" since most nonprofit organizations don't have traditional MBA leadership development programs

nikhil

Regarding international development careers, who are the biggest employers of Georgetown MBA's? I am interested but don't have field experience in developing countries. Is that a difficult transition for someone with an engineering background (and significant nonprofit experience)?

Robin_MBA2010

Net Impact at Georgetown is one of the 'Big 4' professional clubs on campus (marketing, consulting + finance are the others)

Robin_MBA2010

We also have 28 other professional + social clubs, but we're at the top of the heap in terms of membership, activity, member engagement, providing resources, etc.

Jen

This is more of a Fin Aid question, but were any of you worried about the ROI you would get from pursuing your MBA if you were going into a "net impact" career? Do you feel there is enough fin aid support/resources at MSB?

Neel_MBA2010

Nikhil, the key for you if you want to go into development will be to make the case that your prior skills and experiences match a development org's needs. Recent employers of Georgetown MBA interns and grads have been: World Bank, IFC, Finca, ITA, Accion, DAI, State Dept, CIA, USAID and others...

Katie_MBA2011

I noticed a number of people mentioned worry around career switching. A large portion of students here are career switchers and do not have a lot of experience in the field in which they are interested. The great part about Net Impact here is that we have activities, courses, and speakers to provide a knowledge base. Your summer internship will help. Don't let the career switching be a barrier to your application!

Robin_MBA2010

Hi Jen, I think a 'Net Impact' career can mean a lot of different things so there's no one answer...for example, you could be a CSR officer at GE or elsewhere and be competitive with any blue chip corporate salary

Robin_MBA2010 Or....you could be in a start-up nonprofit, or you could be doing sustainability at Wal-Mart, or you could be doing development as a gov't contractor or for a company..

Robin_MBA2010

There's such a huge range that it's a personal decision as to whether or not this is "worth it."

Neel_MBA2010

Also, there is lots of room here for student leaders to create new paths and develop capacity around specific interests -- it's one of the great things about a school this size!

Dan

How is NI managed? Aka, how many student leaders are there in the group, and what kinds of things do they contribute to the overall mission?

Robin_MBA2010

For me personally, I came to business school knowing that this is an issue area I wanted to focus on but as I mentioned in my intro, I'm also excited by brands/consumer marketing and I hope to make a career that blends an interest in social impact with something more "functional" like marketing.

beccbrown

I'm very interested in sustainable agriculture and local food communities. Does NI have any activities that relate to either, whether through speakers/networking with businesses in agriculture or through participating in the DC food community?

Neel_MBA2010

Hi Dan. NI is managed by a student board of directors. 12 students manage all of our activities, events, and programming.

Robin_MBA2010

Hi Jessica -- we have a Nonprofit Internship Fund (it's a student club) that raises \$ for those pursuing unpaid, NONprofit internships

Julia

Do you feel like NI and its members are supported by faculty and administration? Do faculty and admin share your interests in learning about sustainability, development etc.?

Neel_MBA2010

And Dan, we have 142 members as well who contribute on a more ad hoc basis.

Robin_MBA2010

I highlight the NONprofit because my summer internship was actually unpaid, but at a private company who didn't have the resources to pay an intern. However, I took the internship because 1) looked at going back to school as a 2-year continuum, not fits and starts of paid/unpaid work/school 2) working at Stonewall Kitchen has been a dream of mine for a long time so I thought it was worth it and 3) I looked at the skills I wanted to learn and then tried to find the best experience regardless of paycheck

Katie_MBA2011

Hi Beccbrown, very good question! I can tell you that I am actually working with a non-profit (Kid Power) on a program called Veggie Time. We're developing a program where DC kids have vegetable gardens and then sell the vegetables in farmers markets and to local restaurants. The idea is to give business skills to these kids. In addition, today we have a speaker coming from the DC Central Kitchen. There are a lot of things to do. DC is very easy to get involved with in that area!

Katie_MBA2011

My work on Veggie Time is through Board Fellows (a Net Impact program). We have 46 students participating in different projects around the city.

Jen

Does the Board Fellows program have a competitive application process? Or is the application process more about matching the right students with the right companies?

Robin_MBA2010

Hi SMS -- the most interaction we as NI have with agencies probably centers around development, but MSB as a whole has had the FBI, CIA, State Dept, DOE, Treasury, and others come to campus to give presentations/recruit

Robin_MBA2010

Georgetown as a university has great relationships with all of the agencies since so many profs consult for them or have done stints there or in varied political roles

Katie_MBA2011

Board Fellows does have a competitive application based on the number of non-profits that have spots, but everyone who applied this year was able to get a spot. It has grown 33% in student interest this year. The process involves a significant amount of matching. Students list their interests and the non-profits also list what they are looking for. Then, someone goes through and literally matches by hand to ensure that it is a good fit.

Robin_MBA2010

There's so much to learn within the MSB walls, but doing it in this city really builds out your education -- government + business are more closely related than ever before (and as a student having access to so many free museums is great!

Robin_MBA2010

This city is also the networking and happy hour capital of the world (as far as I've experienced) so it's a great place to make new friends through your classmates but also within the broader DC context. DC is full of people from all over the country and the world.

Robin_MBA2010

Within Georgetown, Net Impact is a great club to be a part of -- in general, MSB is the kind of place where you can make your mark. The administration and faculty definitely take input from us, and you can see change happen, which is so rewarding. You only have 2 years in b-school and it goes SUPER fast, so make sure to take advantage of new experiences/interest areas that maybe are new to you.

Katie_MBA2011

The clubs are very supported by faculty, and we are always looking to create partnerships with the other schools within Georgetown. Within your MBA, you can also apply for the International Business Diplomacy (IBD) program and take classes within the School of Foreign Service.

Lisa_MBA2011

DC is also very centrally located so that you can easily get out of the city on the weekends if you like to go biking or hiking or take advantage of other outdoor activities in the Shenandoah mountains or as close as great falls, which is on the Potomac river.

nikhil

this is a non-NI impact related question but related to life as a student at Georgetown. Is it feasible for a MSB student to live in Northern VA and commute to Georgetown. I know how busy business school gets -so is it possible and how much does it take away from the B-school experience

Katie_MBA2011

Hi Nikhil, I currently live in Northern VA and find it very easy to get to and from my home.

Katie_MBA2011

There is a number of people that do. Georgetown has a shuttle that runs from the Rosslyn metro in 5 minute intervals during rush hours.

Neel_MBA2010

And Lee, just to follow up, many students do pursue social enterprise internships -- this summer, we had classmates at FINCA, ACCION, Development Alternatives Inc, APCO (a CSR consultancy), CSR at American Express, and several area nonprofits...

Neel_MBA2010

Adriana - Georgetown Net Impact has a variety of programs. Our key offerings are: (1) Board Fellows, a program where MBA students are placed on nonprofit boards of directors to complete a strategic project, (2) Social Impact Week, a week-long exploration of how social and environmental impact is transforming business (we have speakers all week; this year's keynote was a senior leader from the Gates Foundation); and (3) Net Impact Day, where we invite dozens of nonprofit, government, and private-sector leaders to Georgetown for intimate interactions with students interested in exploring these careers. Additionally, we are constantly hosting speakers, case discussions, and other activities.

Robin_MBA2010

Hope you are all planning to visit MSB -- we have a shiny, new, Fantastic building in the middle of the Gtown campus.

Katie_MBA2011

I think the best part of the new building is the atrium! Sunlight all day, even when we're inside in the winter!

Neel_MBA2010

Adriana - one more thing: Net Impact members also often participate in case competitions, consulting projects, and the like. These are usually pursued by small groups (3-4) of students.

Robin_MBA2010

Hi Team -- 5 minute warning. We'd love to stay all day but we have to run soon.

Lee

Can you comment on your board fellows experience?

Katie_MBA2011

Mine is just starting, but so far it's been great! There's a lot of responsibility for doing a real consulting project for a company that needs you.

Robin_MBA2010

Lee -- I loved my BF placement! I specifically asked for a larger nonprofit and one focused on health care, and I got placed at a nonprofit within NIH, which was awesome.

Adriana

Is there a lot of interaction between the different graduate schools at Georgetown? For example, I can imagine that MSFS students would be interested in attending events organized by the MSB Net Impact club and vice versa with related activities? Thanks

Robin_MBA2010

I helped them develop a marketing plan around their 20th anniversary and pediatric care developments at NIH -- I found the experience fulfilling and worthwhile.

Neel_MBA2010

Hi Noreen -- there are case competitions all over America, usually hosted by a business school. E.G., Berkeley hosts an Education reform competition; Leeds hosts a social enterprise competition, etc. Additionally, we also occasionally host "Georgetown-only" case competitions -- there is one coming up that is focused on green marketing.

Noreen Okarter

The case competitions sound really interesting. Thanks, Neel!

Cynthia

Thank you very much everyone!

Neel_MBA2010

No problem -- best of luck with your search!

Neel_MBA2010

This chat has now ended, thank you for your time today and best of luck with the admissions process.