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Getting DOWN to business

Matthew McConaghy will begin an accounting internship in New York

BY MEGAN CARPENTER
DAILY EMERALD FREELANCE REPORTER

His adrenaline rose every time he jumped up and down in a sea of yellow. His competitive side was always in full throttle as he pumped up the crowd at basketball games. Senior Matthew McConaghy, former vice president of the Pit Crew, thrives in this type of atmosphere. The same energy drives him in his other true passion — accounting.

"I love the nuances about accounting, even though it sounds dull; I am passionate about it," McConaghy said.

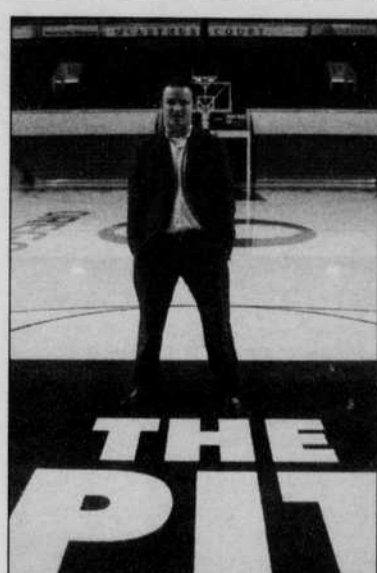
With four other group members, McConaghy won the PricewaterhouseCoopers xACT (extreme accounting) competition hosted by the Charles H. Lundquist College of Business in November. More than 75 students were split into groups of five and given a case to evaluate before a panel of partners from the Portland PricewaterhouseCoopers office.

McConaghy and his team received \$1,000 and went on to compete nationally.

"Matt has a lot of energy. He is someone people want on their team," fellow group member and friend Nicole LaBuwi said. "He would die if he did not have something going on in his life. He needs action."

"He loves a good competition," said Mark Allen, McConaghy's friend and former roommate. "He's a smart guy, and he knows what he is talking about."

At the start of the academic year, McConaghy had little confidence in his ability to obtain a job after graduation. His anxiety was perpetuated by his desire to stay in the United States. McConaghy came to the University from his hometown of Calgary, Alberta, where he grew up as the second oldest of four siblings.



DANIELLE HICKEY | PHOTO EDITOR

Matthew McConaghy, vice president of the Pit Crew, plans to do an internship in New York with Ernst & Young this summer.

After winning the competition, McConaghy mustered up the courage to talk to recruiters from Ernst & Young, an international accounting firm. After a successful interview on campus, he was flown to New York City in April to interview for the summer internship program.

"I was desperate to get a job to stay in the country," he said. "I was preparing myself and being realistic that I might have to go back to Canada. It's always in the back of my mind, and it motivates me to work hard."

In Canada, he said there is a belief that people are only successful if they can make it in the states.

"If you can make it here, you can make it anywhere else. There is always a sentiment that you will be taken care of in Canada, but in the U.S. you have to make your own way," he said.

A month after his second interview, McConaghy was one of 200 students out of 2,000 applicants accepted into the program.

"This time last year I never would have guessed this would happen," he said.

After his summer internship, he will attend the Masters of Accounting program at the University.

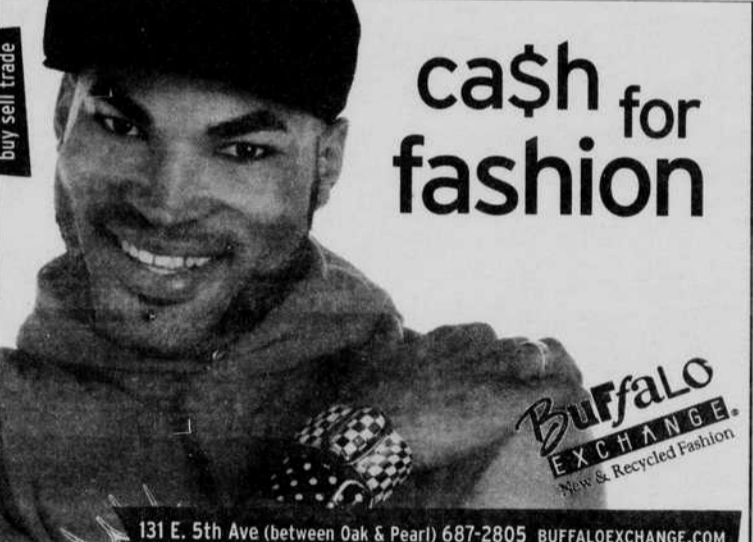
"He is designed for the working world," his brother Mark said. "He throws himself into his work with the utmost vigor and dedication."

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