00:01 (bright music)
00:04 - How do you get your foot in the door
00:05 at one of the big four?
00:07 You take part in a Winternship
00:08 at Suffolk University's Sawyer Business School.
00:11 Hello and welcome to "The On-Ramp", an ongoing series
00:14 that highlights thought leadership
00:15 from the Sawyer Business School in downtown Boston.
00:18 My name is Julia Simone,
00:20 and today I'll be speaking
00:21 with accounting professor Melissa Renschler.
00:24 She's going to talk about Winternships
00:26 and how they help accounting students turn internships
00:29 into job offers at big four firms.
00:32 Professor Renschler, thank you so much for joining us today.
00:35 - Thank you for having me.
00:36 - So help us understand what exactly is a Winternship?
00:39 - Right, so in public accounting we have
00:41 what's called a busy season.
00:42 So typically audit and tax professionals
00:44 are really busy through the months of January and April
00:47 because so much of the work is really just concentrated
00:50 during that point in time.
00:51 So winter internships,
00:52 or as we affectionately call them, Winternships,
00:54 are really an opportunity
00:55 for our Sawyer Business School students to get in there
00:58 during those really busy times to learn,
01:00 have on-the-job training to really learn the ropes,
01:03 learn the types of procedures that they'd be doing
01:06 as full-time professionals
01:07 if they continue in the profession.
01:09 - And why are they helpful for students?
01:12 - Yeah, so Winternships are really helpful,
01:13 mostly because the public accounting firms
01:15 hire full-time employees from their internship pool.
01:19 So the gateway to the profession
01:20 is through these internship opportunities.
01:23 And so primarily getting our students,
01:24 getting their foot in the door through this exposure,
01:28 through that really on-the-job training
01:30 through the Winternships, is the best opportunity for them
01:33 to gain those full-time job offers
01:35 following their graduation.
01:36 - Is the program unique to the Sawyer Business School?
01:39 - So winter internships are not unique
01:42 to accounting students at large,
01:43 but the Winternship program here at SBS is quite unique.
01:46 So what makes the Winternship program here unique
01:49 is that we really cultivate an experience
01:51 around the internship.
01:52 So professors Tracey Riley, Andrew Stuart,
01:54 and myself have built a curriculum
to really help support our students before the internship begins, throughout the duration of it, and then following it. So it's really a mode in order to support them, to prepare them for what to expect on the job prior to the internship starting, to really support them and have them reflect on the experience during the internship itself, and then to help them finish up their coursework prior to their graduation. So it's meant to really be a cohorted experience where the students, even if they're interning at different firms, have an opportunity to connect with one another and really share in that experience throughout their senior year. - And that leads me to my next question. How exactly do students prepare to participate in a Winternship? - Great question. So prior to having that kind of cohorted curriculum experience in their senior year, Professors Tracey Riley, Andrew Stuart, and I really work with students to prepare for even obtaining the internship. We certainly don't expect our eligible students to just apply and get the opportunity on their own. We really work with them up to a year prior to review their resume, hold mock interview sessions, bring in panels of diverse alumni who work at these firms, or bring representatives from the firms themselves to come talk with our students to really work with students to prepare for even obtaining the internship. for even obtaining the internship, to just apply and get the opportunity on their own. We really work with them up to a year prior to review their resume, hold mock interview sessions, bring in panels of diverse alumni who work at these firms, or bring representatives from the firms themselves to come talk with our students to really understand, hey, what type of position would I be most interested in, audit or tax? Which firm culture am I gonna relate to best? So it's a really cohesive experience meant to support the students' confidence and make sure that they're sharing their stories with the firms so that the firms know how well prepared our students are for these experiences. - I was just gonna say, I'm sure that helps their confidence immensely going into it. - Definitely. - And what kind of outcomes have you seen? - So the outcomes for this program have been absolutely amazing. In our first year, so for all three years that this program has been running, all eligible students have received at least one internship offer, and the vast majority of our students upon completing the internship, receive some form of continuing opportunity, whether that's a full-time employment offer or another internship offer with a firm at a later time.
So again, kind of proving that statement that it's such a gateway to the profession is participating in these internship opportunities, and our students have really proved their worth in working really hard during these very busy times and really committing to the profession after they complete the internship.

- In your opinion, what is the best part of the Winternship program?
- So my favorite part, separate from obviously our students succeeding and getting full-time offers, is toward the end of the spring semester in the senior year, we host a travel seminar. So the students get an opportunity to visit Washington DC and New York City and visit with various public accounting firms and regulatory bodies. Notably in New York City, we get the opportunity to work with Stacy Mills, who is one of our Suffolk trustees, and we get to do a flash consulting project with her and her company.

- Professor Renschler, thank you so much for being here.
- Thank you so much for having me.
- Thank you for joining us and we'll see you next time on "The On-Ramp".

(bright music)