



## Lauren Leong

Binghamton University  
Class of 2014/2015

### What degree did you earn?

B.S. in Accounting with a minor in Environmental Studies in 2014 and an M.S. in Accounting in 2015.

### Where are you working right now? How did you choose your career path after graduation?

I'm currently working as an audit associate in the PwC Houston office. I was an Accounting major with an Environmental Studies minor, and I knew that my interests did not lie in the financial services industry. After graduating, I wanted to work in a new industry and be able to explore a new city.

I decided to take my internship with PwC in the Houston office, and before coming back to Binghamton for grad school, I decided that I would take my full time offer for Houston.

I have spent my entire life in the state of New York and wanted to go somewhere new after graduating. I also knew that being able to work in Houston would give me significant exposure to the energy industry, something I would not be able to learn about if I stayed in New York City.

### What are some obstacles that you have had to overcome during your career?

Being new to the culture of Houston is definitely something I've had to adjust to coming from NYC. I purposefully chose to move to a place where people don't know about Binghamton University. It's been a humbling experience in that I've had to learn to network and not be afraid to put myself out there when meeting new people. It's also made me appreciate Binghamton much more. When people that I meet in Texas actually have ties to the school, are from central New York, NYC, it's always a pleasant surprise - and it reminds me that you never know where you'll end up in life.

Being okay with not knowing everything is another obstacle I've had to overcome with starting my career. It's impossible for me to know everything about what I've been assigned, and there's no way I can prepare myself for the endless things I'll encounter that I don't know. I've learned to have grace with myself in recognizing that the learning curve is steep post-graduation, at least for me.

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The oil and gas industry is completely new to me, and seeing accounting theories I've only learned about in class applied to my daily work is also just as new to me. So being patient with myself and having the transition has helped with overcoming that.

### What about your job motivates you?

The endless opportunity to learn motivates me. Knowing that I will be learning something new every day, whether it's big or small, can be pretty exciting. Seeing an audit come together, hearing about other lines of service within the firm, hearing about opportunities to learn more about a particular industry - all of it is crucial in developing a global perspective. And of course, the lovely people I work with everyday make going into work pretty fun too.



## How have your experiences at Binghamton helped you in your career?

Words cannot even express how grateful I am for my time at Binghamton. From a professional standpoint, working on team projects and being a student in SOM was really helpful for me in terms of learning to work with different kinds of people. You may not always enjoy working with all the members of the teams you're assigned to, but learning to work with different personalities will help you succeed. I know that sounds really cliché, but it's definitely been true for me. Although my coursework did not directly prepare me for the day-to-day work I'm doing, I was able to learn more about my own work ethic and ways that I learn best through my classes at BU. That's definitely helped me with transitioning to a work environment where I honestly don't fully understand everything that I'm doing every single day.

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## Would you please be able to provide some insight into the projects you are working on?

I currently work on two public energy clients. One is specifically a midstream corporation, and the other is a multinational energy company. As an auditor, the big picture scope of my work is pretty straightforward - auditing financial statements. But what I do on a daily basis varies greatly, especially as a first year associate. During my first busy season, I primarily worked on helping with acquisition accounting, and audit work performed over property, plant and equipment.

Working on energy clients in Houston at this time has definitely been an interesting experience - I can see firsthand how the shifts in oil and gas prices impact my clients and therefore my day-to-day work, and the city that I'm living in. The recent changes in the economy regarding oil and gas have been especially significant for auditors - it has become more imperative for us to be aware of what's actually happening with our clients, how their revenues and fixed assets are impacted, and how they're trying to present all this information to potential investors. Things that used to not be as much of a concern when all these companies were thriving, are suddenly relevant because of the way the economy has changed. Getting to see that firsthand has been a really great learning opportunity.

## What community service opportunities does your firm provide, if any?

PwC provides us with a lot of opportunities to give back - there are always volunteer opportunities posted that you can sign up for, and

teams are generally flexible if there's something specific you want to attend and make time for. I've participated in market team events where we volunteered at the Houston Food Bank and will be helping out at the Ronald McDonald house next month.

## What do you consider to be your most important accomplishments post-graduation?

This probably sounds really silly, but learning to be a better driver in Texas is something I'm really proud of. And living in Texas where the speed limit is 75 MPH, which naturally means people are going 85-90 MPH regularly on 6 lane highways, was really scary to me at first. But driving is something I have to do every day, especially when friends come to visit. It's something that was incredibly intimidating at first, but with time, has become like second nature to me. And as someone that loves road trips, especially because driving on the highway for hours is fairly straightforward, learning to conquer driving in the city of Houston has been really validating. It also represents me being patient with the process of growing and learning, and just being comfortable with my own skills and abilities.

*This Alumni Spotlight was created by VPMR Louis Clements.*

