MBA Internships: Austin Smith (MBA ’26)

February 3, 2026



Austin Smith (MBA ’26)

Concentration: Energy and Data Analytics
Internship: J.P. Morgan Bank in Houston, Texas

Where did you intern and what was your title?

I was a Summer Associate at the J.P. Morgan Private Bank in Houston, Texas. The Private Bank sits within Asset and Wealth Management and works with ultra-high-

net-worth individuals on their banking, planning, lending, and investing needs.

How did you land your internship?

My search was rooted in networking. One of the great things about Freeman is the constant opportunity to meet people. In my case, two recruiters from the J.P. Morgan Private Bank visited campus, and I was able to meet them and learn about their roles. In my experience, networking is the only strategy that consistently works, simply applying online no longer leads to meaningful results.

What were your responsibilities during your internship?

The role of a full-time associate at the Private Bank is business development, which means building relationships and working to help clients. The internship was entirely focused on preparing us for that role. While we were given some responsibilities by senior bankers, our main responsibility was to learn: to learn what the Private Bank offers, which strategies work and which don’t, how to effectively articulate our value proposition, and how to best serve clients. Simply put, our job was to be a sponge.

Can you share a memorable moment from your internship that had a significant impact on your professional growth?

Although many individual moments made an impression, the greatest impact came from working with my fellow interns. I worked alongside two other MBA interns, and we became close friends. We collaborated constantly, especially on our final project — the Business Plan presentation. Each intern had to deliver a 20-minute presentation to the entire Houston office outlining the types of clients they hoped to cover. We spent days in a conference room reviewing, critiquing and practicing each other’s presentations.

Afterward, the Market Director told us, and the entire office, that it was the first time he could remember all the interns delivering actionable and well-researched business plans. We all agreed our success came from working together. That experience taught me that no matter how strong an individual is, a great team will always outperform them.

What challenges did you face during your internship? How did you overcome them?

My biggest challenge was personal: I’m an introvert, and the role is naturally suited for extroverts. Being a successful banker ultimately requires strong sales skills. On the first day, the head of the Private Bank told us that the best bankers are the ones who can walk up to anyone and instantly form a connection. That sounded terrifying to me.

But as the internship progressed, I realized it wasn’t as intimidating as it seemed. I learned that the key is to ask questions, lots of them. Whether it's asking for a coffee chat, asking for lunch, or asking for advice, people are usually open to having a conversation. That shift in mindset helped me overcome the discomfort.

How did your internship impact your career growth? Did it lead to any valuable connections or opportunities?

The internship significantly helped both my professional and personal growth. I met incredibly capable and intelligent people and formed strong friendships. It also pushed me out of my comfort zone. For an introvert like me, even a single coffee chat can be draining, let alone the 40 I did over the summer. But I learned that meaningful growth comes from doing hard things, and this internship proved that to me.