

Spotlight



Kuwait-based interns from Mays Business School and their co-workers gather at Camp Udairi in Kuwait.

Condition Critical

Mays business students work with Halliburton to experience the business of war.

Business may be business, but the stakes are much higher when it comes to managing the intricacies of procurement, transport, and accounting in the midst of a war. That's the lesson that 12 undergraduates from Texas A&M University's Mays School of Business in College Station learned last summer, when they embarked on a labor-intensive internship with Halliburton subsidiary KBR in Kuwait, Jordan, and the United Arab Emirates. It was the first such collaboration between Halliburton and the Mays School.

"This isn't your typical 8-to-5, weekends-off internship," says Graham Gilkerson, a senior accounting major at Mays. Gilkerson audited employee records and oversaw accruals and inventories for KBR subcontractors in Kuwait City. This internship required the ability to "deal with conditions that are out

of your hands," he says.

As the U.S. military's supplier of logistical and life support services to operations in countries such as Iraq and Afghanistan, KBR supplies U.S. troops and coalition forces with everything they need with the exception of weapons. It builds base camps and transports materials such as food, fuel, mail, laundry, and air transportation. In addition, KBR employees must cope with sandstorms, oppressive heat, and the realities of insurgency violence.


Many of the interns spent two and a half months working 60- and 80-hour workweeks in the capitals of Kuwait City and Dubai. Gilkerson, who studied Arabic with a tutor last year, sees his experience as a first step to an international

career. "It gives me the desire not only to look at what businesses are doing in international settings, but what effect they have on the people there."

For Halliburton, the internships aren't just a way to tap the talents of enthusiastic business students. They're also a way to seek out future employees. Trey Scott, a finance major who interned at KBR's Dubai central office for Middle Eastern

projects, worked side-by-side with Arab workers wearing native robes and Western-dressed KBR employees. He

says he is interested in a career at Halliburton post-graduation. In fact, about half of KBR's interns return as interns or are hired full-time.

That's just what Halliburton CEO Dave Lesar likes to hear. "These students are working in the Middle East to get a flavor of what we're doing and add value and knowledge," he says. "We see these folks as our next generation of managers." 

"THIS ISN'T YOUR TYPICAL 8-5, WEEKENDS-OFF INTERNSHIP."