

See You on the Runway

By California Delta **CONSTANCE DILLON GIBBS**

This past summer, Delaware Alpha **JACKIE RAFFERTY** interned at Oscar de la Renta in New York City. Oscar de la Renta is recognized in the industry for empowering women through fashion. The label is known for its women's evening wear, suits and bridal collection, and its designs are a favorite on the Hollywood red carpet and have been worn by women like Hillary Clinton, Laura Bush, Oprah Winfrey and Amal Clooney.

Growing up, Jackie loved art class and the opportunity to be creative. She became interested in fashion in high school after poring over the pages of *Vogue* magazine. She began sketching different looks and learned everything she could about careers in the fashion industry. When she arrived at the University of Delaware, she decided she wanted to double major in apparel design and fashion merchandising.

Many students with these majors secure internships in the fashion industry during summer breaks. Jackie applied to several positions and landed the role with Oscar de la Renta after connecting with the company via LinkedIn®. She created her profile on the social media site as a requirement for one of her classes and was happy to take advantage of the platform's professional networking capabilities in her internship search.

Jackie is a Long Island native and traveled into New York each morning for her internship. Oscar de la Renta's office is located in the heart of midtown Manhattan, right across from Bryant Park, one of the city's iconic town squares. Jackie enjoyed exploring a new area, and the neighborhood has become her favorite part of the city.

Jackie's internship was with the fashion merchandising team which partners closely with the design team. While the design team creates the look of the clothes, The merchandising team is responsible for all the tasks necessary to price, market and distribute the clothes, like securing fabrics and finishes. Jackie worked on the Spring 2019 collection, helping research the cost of fabrics and embroidery in domestic and international markets, and predicting the investment required to fulfill the line for stores and showrooms.



Above: Apparel design and fashion merchandising major **JACKIE RAFFERTY**, Delaware Alpha, interned with Oscar de la Renta in New York City this past summer.

"My favorite part of the internship was attending fittings," Jackie said. "On my first day, I attended a bridal fitting. I had never seen an Oscar de la Renta bridal gown in person, but it was amazing to watch the designers work their magic. Even though a bridal gown is only worn once, the designers created a dress that was made to last forever."

Jackie's internship allowed her to take what she learned in school and apply it to the real world. Her experience has also prepared her for her career after graduation. While she enjoyed learning more about the haute couture world, she realized her true passion lies with ready-to-wear apparel. This year, for her senior project, she is required to put together a collection including designing, sewing and finishing the clothes. She is going to focus on clothes for the everyday woman featuring a blue, white and tan aesthetic that is inspired by Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis and the Hamptons.

"I think fashion is something very simple, but it can also be very powerful and impactful," Jackie said. "I want the woman who wears my clothes to feel good in her own skin. I want her to walk around proud and confident and be able to conquer her day." ←←