Jonah Waxman
Colby Class of 2005
Major: International Studies, Government

Where are you now? What are you doing?
Jonah recently relocated to Minnesota, where he is an investment officer for the Mayo Clinic. He is co-managing the real assets portfolio, with a primary focus on oil and gas, but also metals and agriculture. Before joining the Mayo Clinic, Jonah was an executive director in J.P. Morgan’s commodities group, providing investment research and analysis to corporate clients, institutional investors, central banks and sovereign wealth funds. Jonah decided to make the transition because he wanted to focus on just one client, be part of the investment decision process, take a longer term perspective on investing, and see tangible benefits for a non-profit institution.

Why Global Studies? Why Colby?
Jonah has always been interested in Latin America. In high school, Jonah lived abroad in both Costa Rica and Bolivia. Before starting at Colby, he deferred admission for a year to live in Salamanca, Spain. Jonah knew he wanted to be at a small liberal arts school and to have an international component to his college education, and although Colby is a small school in Maine, it boasts a great study abroad program—the best of both worlds. He made the most of these opportunities by going abroad three times: a JanPlan in Costa Rica, a semester in Argentina, and a JanPlan in Chile interning for a consulting firm focused on developing corporate social responsibility programs.

What was the best class you ever took?
Economic Policy and Performance in Latin America with Professor Patrice Franko (EC214 - she still teaches it!)

How did Global Studies set you apart?
Going into finance, Jonah had a very different background from others in his field. He admits it might have made it more difficult to get a foot in the door at the beginning, but in the long run it has given him a distinct advantage. Having a global perspective, experience abroad, and language skills helps separate him from the rest of the pack.

Any advice for current Global Studies students?
Jonah wishes he had taken a statistics class at Colby as well as additional economics classes - whether you go into finance or not, he says, understanding these basic concepts is incredibly helpful. Develop your network early. Reach out and make genuine connections, and not just when you’re thinking about finding jobs and internships.
Talk to as many people as possible and find out what careers exist. Getting people to talk about what they do will help you figure out what you want out of your career. It will help you discover different types of opportunities that you may not have known existed! Jonah says he never expected to work on the investment staff of an endowment and that kind of position wasn’t even on his radar when he was at Colby. Don’t be afraid to start over or change career paths and don’t let adversity or setbacks knock you off your game. Jonah said that getting laid off in 2008 was the best thing that could have happened to his career – although it was difficult at the time, that experience helped him figure out what he wanted to do and helped him restart his career in commodities.

Thanks Jonah!