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This summer I had the opportunity to work at Sandbox Industries, a venture capital firm with three separate divisions: Cultivian Sandbox which focuses on food and agricultural technology, Blue Cross Blue Shield (BCBS) Venture Partners which invests in healthcare, and the insurance technology arm, Sandbox Insurtech Ventures. During my time here, I worked primarily within their BCBS Venture Partners division evaluating healthcare startups. The firm is stage-agnostic, making investments in everything from Series A to private equity funding rounds.

One of the first projects that I worked on was on the operational side of the business. My job was to help identify a new potential CEO for Healthify, one of our portfolio companies. For this project I selected a number of comparable companies, evaluated their executive teams, and put together a profile of an ideal candidate. Using our research and guidance, the portfolio company is currently in the process of hiring a new CEO. Another project that I enjoyed working on was with the investment team. I looked through all of the investments that Sandbox ever made and recorded the key co-investors that the firm had participated with. Using various databases including Pitchbook, Crunchbase, and the firm's own records, I was able to highlight Sandbox's specific role as an active investor in different companies and draw attention to our strong relationships with other prominent venture capital firms.

Everyday this summer brought its own share of interesting experiences and surprises. However, one day in particular that stuck out to me was when the firm brought in the former CEO of WebMD, Ben Slocum, to address one of our Friday morning pipeline meetings. My team at Sandbox frequently corresponds with healthcare experts to hear their opinions on new investment opportunities and industry trends. Ben discussed his experiences serving as the CEO of UnitedHealthcare in California, the CEO of a \$1.1 billion healthcare company that BCBS later acquired, and then as the CEO of WebMD. He is one of the most highly regarded healthcare industry executives in the world, and here I was sitting across the table from him. For an hour the team and I picked his brain to get his thoughts on different healthcare startups that were in the sourcing pipeline and where the industry is moving over the next few years. Having the opportunity to have a casual, open conversation with someone like Ben was an amazing experience, and I learned so much that day from just sitting in a room with him.

What surprised me most about the summer was how little I knew about the world of venture capital investing. I had some prior knowledge about the field and spent hours reading up on startup investing before beginning my internship. However, reading about an industry as dynamic as venture capital and actually working at a firm are two completely different experiences. For example, you never truly realize how difficult the sourcing or diligence processes are until you are the one in charge of it. There are countless hours of waiting, rescheduling, and research that surrounds the role of a venture capitalist. Moreover, creating and maintaining relationships with founders, other firms, and industry experts is another job on its own. My initial understanding was that all venture capital functioned like Shark Tank. I thought the investors sat in their offices and entrepreneurs seeking funding would come in and

out giving their pitches. This couldn't be further from what the real world is like, and I couldn't be more grateful for my learning experiences at Sandbox.

My advice for next year's 2020 IVCA scholars would be to soak up as much as possible from the people you meet next summer. Whether it's at an IVCA event, speaking with someone at your firm, or even a fellow scholar, always try and get to know people. Some of them you may not get along with, but others, as I've experienced over the last few weeks, may become lifelong mentors or your best friends. I came into the program thinking I was going to put my head down and work, learning from the assignments that I would be given. However, looking back, I really learned the most from coffee chats and sitting in meetings. The desire to learn, whether it's academically, professionally, or socially, is an essential trait of any successful IVCA scholar. Having this desire has helped me immensely this summer, and I hope that the next class of scholars is just as hungry to learn and improve themselves as we all were this year.