

The best of both worlds

By Kevin Holten

There was a time when a degree in computer science, biology or chemistry from Dickinson State University forced you to live in a far off land, away from family, friends, the Badlands and all that is intimate and familiar. That is no longer the case, thanks to a company called Trial Runners.

You see, Trial Runners is a contract research organization that provides biotech and pharmaceutical companies with cost-effective and results-driven development programs, thereby providing solutions to a wide scope of clinical research challenges. In other words, they manage, regulate and analyze drug and device clinical trials to determine if the products are safe for you and me. It is a noble effort from a company located in downtown Dickinson, a company that is proving you can be successful, go global and use Dickinson as a world headquarters—all while employing talented and well educated DSU graduates.

“The people at Trial Runners are great and the opportunities are endless,” said Ashley Hepperle '07, a Richardton, N.D., native and DSU chemistry major. “I love the trust and empowerment that this company emanates. I love the work and that I am being challenged every day not only to be a better employee but a better person.”

The company was founded by Jill (Woodbury) Healy, a Dickinson native, and her husband Patrick, a New Yorker whom she met while doing research out east. After working together for some time, they got married and decided they'd do for themselves what they were already doing for someone else. So she showed him Dickinson and he fell in love with it. The result is a success story that includes a thriving family, Dickinson, DSU, Trial Runners and things only getting better.

“Our plan is to grow significantly in the next five years,” said Patrick Healy. “That includes having an office in New York City as well as Latin America, Australia and South Africa. Dickinson will remain the global headquarters.”

Since fall 2009, Trial Runners has been employing interns from DSU with tremendous success. The company recently launched a nonprofit independent affiliate company called TR Cares, which provides clinical research services at cost or less to companies that are unable to raise enough money to develop a promising drug.

Because there was no money to launch TR Cares, Trial Runners relied on the DSU interns to get the company off the ground. To date, they have worked with four interns and their impact has been invaluable. The team designed the logo, built the website, searched the globe for partnership opportunities, designed and mailed brochures, launched a Twitter account and built a large number of followers, including the Gates Foundation. It is a prime example of everyone benefiting from a partnership. Trial Runners receives high quality work while the interns reap the benefits of practical application.

“From the beginning, our intent was to take advantage of recruiting the best and brightest graduates out of DSU coming from the science and nursing programs,” said Patrick Healy. “As we grow we will be looking for candidates from the business and finance programs. If it wasn't

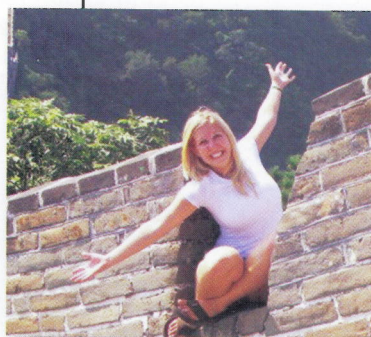
for DSU, we probably wouldn't have started our business here.”

“I really enjoy that Trial Runners allows me to expand my horizons,” said Brady Gilje '08, a mathematics and computer science major. “I can work with people all across the country (and world) without having to leave the comforts of home. I also appreciate that I am actively involved in making this a healthier and safer world.”

Trial Runners provides an outstanding opportunity for DSU graduates to obtain a corporate style job right out of college and allows these young business professionals to stay in Dickinson.

“I really enjoy working at Trial Runners, which creates a great working atmosphere,” said Brittany Brown '07, a biology major from Harrold, S.D. “It makes me feel good that each day we are working in part to find a cure/treatment for people living with diseases. Both of these things make it easy and fun to come to work. And I was excited to have an opportunity to stay in this area.”

It's the best of both worlds.



 **Trial Runners**
The CRO you trust.

 **TR Cares**

DSU Alum Ashley Hepperle '07 on the Great Wall in China.



DSU Alums Brittany Brown '07 and Brady Gilje '08 pose in front of Trial Runners offices.