Palak credits the liberal arts with helping her discover a love of finance. "I came here intending to study science, and eventually took a drawing course. That opened up possibilities that I hadn't considered, and it taught me that there were subjects beyond biology that I might enjoy learning."

With no background whatsoever in finance, she began taking business courses. "Business administration was appealing as a major because I could choose from the selection of specific concentrations within that field. Then, during the fall of my junior year, I took a business finance course and totally loved it. The class was really intense, but what grabbed me was how dedicated the professor was. She set up 6:00 a.m. study sessions, and she was there for every one of them. Surprisingly, that turned out to be great. I never considered studying so early, but it really works."

In one course, Palak had to conduct an analysis of an existing company. "I chose J. Crew because I've got a big interest in fashion. I had to look at how the company operates, who the main people are and how that firm works within the current economy. I wasn't able to get any financial data from J. Crew because the company is now private and doesn't release that information, so I had to find it on my own. But that was fine because what I really love about finance is the research aspect."

Palak says that she also likes the small classes, which give her extraordinary access to her professors. "I feel tremendously supported. Another thing I love about this discipline is the way the various elements overlap. I'm taking the intermediate class in finance now, and so much of what we're covering extends back to what we learned in our introductory course. It all makes sense, and ultimately I feel as though I'll be able to hit the ground running when I get into the working world."