

Internship Reflection Q & A

Career Exploration: Exploration of career goals through the internship experience.

Q: *How has your internship experience shaped your views of your major and/or your career aspirations or plans?*

A: My internship allowed me the opportunity to explore Social Media Marketing and Content Creation—something that I had been wanting to learn more about since my Digital Writing course. I used Buffer and Canva, created content from start to finish, and managed the organization's social media platforms.

Q: *What aspects of your internship helped you to clarify your career goals?*

A: Certain aspects of the internship help me clarify that I don't believe social media marketing is where I want to take my career. I don't enjoy spending much time on my phone personally and found myself always needing to have access to it for this internship. I would get prompts to post and emails to respond to all throughout the day. I know that my time management played a part in this decision as well, and as much as I enjoyed asynchronous aspect of the remote position, I thrive better in a more structured work environment with clearly set goals and objectives. That does not mean that I am not a self-starter or that I do not take initiative, but I would rather work as part of a team environment where we meet daily even if that is through zoom. Weeks without connection to my team made it difficult to understand what the organization wanted, and email correspondence alone was not my preference.

Q: *What's next for you professionally?*

A: What's next for me professionally is hopefully I am going to get a summer internship that is more writing focused, but still within the realm of non-profit work. I am attending graduate school in the fall at Old Dominion University, and I am pursuing a MPA (master's in public administration). I was asked to volunteer with Compact Canine Rescue, and I am considering how I could fit that into my schedule because I would love to continue working with the organization even if it is from a volunteer standpoint.

Integrated Learning: Connection, application, and/or synthesis of classroom learning as it relates to the internship experience.

Q: *What **new** knowledge, skills, and abilities did you gain by completing this experience? Provide specific examples and demonstrations of your work.*

A: I learned how to use Canva which is a useful tool for making graphics, logos, printable content, social media reels and posts, and more. I even invested in the Canva pro-option

for my personal use outside of this internship because I enjoy it that much. I learned how to use Monday.com and Buffer to map out my social media campaigns for the organization. I am not super familiar with Excel or Google Sheets and Monday.com made it so easy for me to create timeline overviews for the campaigns. That planning made content creation and social media management possible.

Examples:



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Q: *What skills or experiences from your internship do you think will be most valuable in your future career?*

A: My experience with the event Dressed to the CaNines was very valuable to me and my future career. I learned how to network and just how important those community ties are especially in the animal welfare and non-profit world. It absolutely makes a difference who you know. I also was able to start a social media campaign to promote the event, sell tickets, and encourage participants to sign up for the runway event. This opportunity allowed me to be involved in a real event, and real money was raised for this organization. It felt so good to know that all my work in marketing the event had a real impact.

Professional Communication: The use of communication strategies and skills appropriate for settings, purposes, and audiences.

Q: *What does it mean to act as a professional in your field?*

A: There is a level of professionalism that is involved with writing that requires you to be able to “read the room.” I always start very professionally, but once I create closer relationships with those I am working closely with, I do address my emails a little more

personally and less professionally. Being professional in writing isn't about what you wear, but it's how you present yourself through your words.

Q: *What kinds of communication strategies and skills must you leverage?*

A: You absolutely must know how to write an email, address it, title it, and sign it. This is a pretty baseline communication skill needed to survive daily in a writing position.

Q: *How should you look? Act? Behave?*

A: In a remote position, the way you look is not as important unless you're meeting remotely every day through zoom or some other virtual meeting. We used Google meet for our bi-weekly meetings, and I didn't dress professionally for those meetings because I very quickly picked up on what everyone else was wearing that it was not required. Of course, I think that in every work or professional environment it is important to conduct yourself in a respectful manner. Even though I could sense there were some interorganizational disagreements, the board members remained respectful of their colleagues.

Q: *How have your communication, analytical, or ethical reasoning skills benefited your internship organization?*

A: My communication skills benefited my internship organization by demonstrating the power of collaboration. By collaborating with other non-profits and host venue sites, I was able to increase the publicity that Compact Canine Rescue was receiving through social media. This gained the organization new followers, more views, and more exposure. I used my analytical skills to share with the organization best practices and strategies to increase engagement with their followers.

Final Thoughts

Q: *What was the most challenging aspect of your experience?*

A: The most challenging aspect of my internship experience was time management. Already having a full-time school schedule and adding on the additional hours required for an internship was not something I was entirely prepared for. My advice to future interns is really think about what you want to get out of your experience and prepare yourself for work you are agreeing to take on. And speak up! Bridget and Dr. Lacy were great contacts for me in the English department, and they encouraged all of us to be open and honest about our experience.