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End-term Reflection #3

I would like to start by saying how thankful I am for the opportunity to complete this internship with the English Department at ODU, MHIA, the Mellon Foundation, and Compact Canine Rescue (CCR). I feel accomplished in the learning tasks that I set out to achieve, but that was not without help from my mentors, Dr. Sarah Lacy-Hallah and Bridget Dolan, and my internship supervisor, Shawna Kerns. And of course, Ms. Kathy Moiser, for helping me get started. As the semester is ending and my internship is officially over, I would like to reflect on all that I have gained and accomplished.

The Communication and Marketing internship with CCR allowed me the space to put my ideas into practice. Being able to experience concepts learned in the classroom gave me a new understanding of the role that professional writing has in social media marketing.

Specific elements I put into practice from my coursework include:

- Clear and concise writing
- ADA compliant design
- Rhetorical appeals – ethos, logos, & pathos
- Asynchronous communication

I expected to apply all these concepts to my internship work. What I did not expect was how surprisingly difficult content creation was. I fully understand why content creation is a full-time career. Sometimes I felt like I was doing the work of four people. I completed the research, I created the graphics, I wrote the captions, I animated the stories, I edited the reels, and I marketed the material. The other element of surprise was keeping the audience engaged. There were a lot of trials and errors to discover what social media strategies worked with our target audience and what fizzled out.

What I found to be the most useful rhetorical strategy in social media marketing are the rhetorical appeals, ethos, logos, and pathos. Throughout my Intro to Rhetorical Studies, we applied these concepts to class discussion, reading annotations, and our advocacy artifact project. From my own experience, it was apparent that not having ethos negatively affects the success of a social media post with its target audience. By contrast, Compact Canine Rescue ethos in the animal welfare community feels innate. Having the ethos of a reputable established animal rescue helped when developing content for their followers. I also heavily leaned into emotional appeals as a rhetorical strategy to increase audience engagement.

I really wanted to complete another internship with MHIA, but I am unable to do it because I am graduating this spring. I am determined to find a summer position (preferably paid) to seek out on-the-job experience with non-profit administration and management. I am interested to see more of the behind-the-scenes work that is required to run a non-profit. Does it connect to my professional writing background, and align with what skills I have learned in my most recent internship? I have always considered a career in public relations (PR), and I think that my experience in social media marketing prepares me for this next step.

I'd like to end this reflection on the last thoughts I have on the learning intentions I set for myself at the very beginning of my internship.

Originally, I sought out to learn more about:

- Content creation
- Networking
- Creative writing/storytelling
- Social media campaign strategies

In addition to these expectations, I wanted to learn about other opportunities that existed for myself, having earned a degree in professional writing. These skills are all valuable assets to add to my resume, and I am confident in my decision to pursue this internship. At the end of this experience, I completed the intentions I made for myself, and I opened the doors to many other opportunities available to professional writers. For the people in the back, professional writing is not just for tech writers! You can be creative and have fun with it, too.