

Internships Provide a Door to the Future

By Sharon Frain
Assistant Editor

"This year is one of the worst years since World War II to get a job," is an often heard phrase in the media today. The depressing facts are that you have to know someone to get a good job, you have to have connections. Even if you have some strings available to pull you need some experience, but how can you get experience if no one is hiring? This turns into a vicious circle that has no end.

The main way students place a foot in the door of their future is by utilizing the internship program. St. Andrews' internship program, headed by Corinne Nicholson, provides opportunities for interns to expand their awareness of the world beyond campus. The student involved in the program will be able to explore potential careers, gain experience in making decisions and problem solving, and develop self-reliance and a code of values.

Internships are not only beneficial for the student but also for the internship site supervisor. Jim Henderson of the Laurinburg Chamber of Commerce has used several St. Andrews students in the past and the program has met with great success. He not only feels that internships are good

for the students but also for the individual firm and the community.

Henderson said, "The intern is an ambassador for the college. He or she gives a good impression to the community of being a hard worker." He continued by telling how the internship is a valuable tool. "The intern gets to see what it is like in the real world while also allowing time for office flexibility. With interns I find more time to do the things that I've been meaning to get done."

Hewitt Fulton of LOF feels that internships are a shared responsibility. "We provide learning for the intern through knowledge and expertise while in return we expect meaningful work. It is basically a give and take relationship." The knowledge of out of the classroom experience is recognized as helpful by not only the site supervisor but by the student. Seniors Cindy Cushman, Diane Reid and Don Smith have had enhancing internship experiences in varying fields. Their respective work involved working at a senator's office, public defender's office and the Washington Center.

Cushman received a Washington Term Center Internship her junior year. The Washington Center is a non-profit educational organization which provides students learning opportunities through internships in

their area of interest around D.C. Cushman worked in the individual sector with a training and employment service for disadvantaged youth. This service concentrated on in-school work achievement aimed at keeping kids from dropping out, providing GED training, and child care for single moms.

The area Cushman dealt with most was communications. She helped-out in public relations, and worked with a newsletter. One thing that she noticed from her experience was how much her writing skills had improved. After the internship was over Cushman received a job offer from her supervisor. Reflecting on her experience as a Washington Center intern she said, "The networking opportunity was tremendous. Learning how the Hill [Capitol Hill] worked was very important even though it was very disgusting. I want to go into Church social work so the internship was very important for me to see how a non-profit organization works."

Diane Reid also experienced a taste of Capitol Hill after an internship with Sen. Albert Gore, D-Tenn., during the Winter Term of 1990. Her work as a legislative assistant consisted of working at the Congressional Research Library and writing replies to Gore's constituents. Reid would

include information packets, in the letters she wrote, which dealt with certain social issues, such as paternal leave and environmental impact issues. When a person writes their congressperson there is a big blue notebook including form letters written by a staff member that is changed to fit the concern and then run through a signature machine. In other words, the senator almost never responds directly to constituents.

Reid agreed that the internship lets you get a taste of real life, however disheartening it may be. She said, "Gore was only in the office one day in 39 days and I only met him once, in an elevator. He and his wife, Tipper's schedules are completely planned. My main beef is that the signature machine needs to be gotten rid of and thus a little honesty would be seen in dealing with the constituents." Reid had initially wanted to be a politician but this internship changed her mind. Reid said, "I used this internship to find out for sure whether or not it was something I wanted to do. I realize that to be a politician you have to sell yourself according to what corporate backer you have, for you have to respond to them first. There is no time for yourself and the signature machine signifies how this is not a true democracy, for everything depends

on the corporate vote."

This past term Don Smith experienced first hand how the Laurinburg court system operated by working with the public defender's office. The main remembrance of his internship was witnessing a murder trial in which the defendant was illiterate. Smith saw how the legal system was a different world in a small town than in a big city. Smith said, "The public defenders of Laurinburg do a great job for they really try to insure the rights of the defendants are kept, which is particularly hard with the illiteracy rate being so high. The defenders' degree of professionalism and experience is top-notch."

Don, who has been particularly active in the theatre department also used his internship to decide whether or not the legal profession was for him. Smith said, "I'm still wavering over whether or not to attend graduate school in political science, focusing on constitutional law. I might want to become a political analyst to follow the Supreme Court train of thought."

Whether or not the intern winds up using his or her experience towards a career, the knowledge gained is inevitably priceless.

Moore Finds Winter Internship at Meadowbrook House to be a Challenging, yet Rewarding Experience

By Cindy Moore
Special to The Lance

This past Winter Term, I completed an internship at the Meadowbrook House in Maxton, NC. This home is one of four centers in this area designed to provide a treatment living environment for children who have been classified by the state as "Willie-M." What basically means is that these kids, for a number of reasons, have severe emotional problems and are violently assaultive. Now, I bet you are wondering how I found this position, and why the heck I would want it in the first place. Well, for starters I am interested in working as a Guidance Counselor, and with Alvin Smith's assistance, he pointed me

toward Meadowbrook. I interviewed with the home manager and attended a training session in Lumberton at the Family Alternative Center.

I had never heard of "Willie-M's" before I did this internship, so this whole experience was a tremendous challenge. On my first day at Meadowbrook, I got punched in the face by one of the troublesome clients. This was not the only time she attacked me. It really threw me for a loop. These kids can be totally unpredictable if you are not closely familiar with the barely detectable signs of trouble. I almost didn't go back after that first day because I really feared for my personal safety. Even with staff supervision, there was just no telling what one of those kids might do. But I did go back the next day. I went back

to one of the most rewarding experiences of my whole life.

Because I have not had many psychology courses, I worked as a tutor with the kids, helping them with their homework and organizing creative activities and projects for them to do. The first week was kind of awkward because we were all getting to know each other and I was really on my guard. But I guess I passed inspection, because the kids really warmed up to me as soon as we started working together. Our main project was a talent show. I let each kid pick out something he or she wanted to do, and we put on an entire production. The kids really got into the talent show and wanted to practice all the time. I noticed that when they had something concrete to dedicate their time and

energy toward, their problem behaviors were greatly improved.

It was not all fun and games, and there were many days that I came home in tears because I was so frustrated or shocked by what I had seen or heard. It is hard to love someone when they will not let you, and some days, those kids were determined to ruin your life. I managed to come a long way in only four weeks. I learned an incredible amount of information about the problem behaviors of "Willie-M's," but most of all, I learned how to reach out to these kids, interesting them in other things besides fighting, cursing, screaming, and running away.

I would not recommend this type of internship for just anyone. You see a lot of things that you cannot tell

other people because of confidentiality. You see a lot of things that scare the hell out of you. But if you are dedicated enough to get beyond all of this, you will come away with the treasured memories. And who knows, I may have made a difference in at least one of the kids' lives. Unfortunately, however, I am no longer allowed to go back because of insurance purposes, and this is sometimes difficult to deal with. I miss my kids a lot, and wonder if they miss me. But I would not trade that experience for the world. If you are interested in checking out the possibilities of working there sometime, come talk to me, or Alvin Smith. You have to have some guts, but it will be well worth it, I assure you.

Blue Interns with Campbell Soup

By Scott Blue
Special to The Lance

Interning at Campbell Soup Company in Maxton not only gave me the opportunity to fulfill a requirement for my major, but also a chance to get a small sense of what the work place will actually be like. The work was stimulating, the knowledge substantial, and the experience superior to anything I had imagined preceding my time spent at Campbell's.

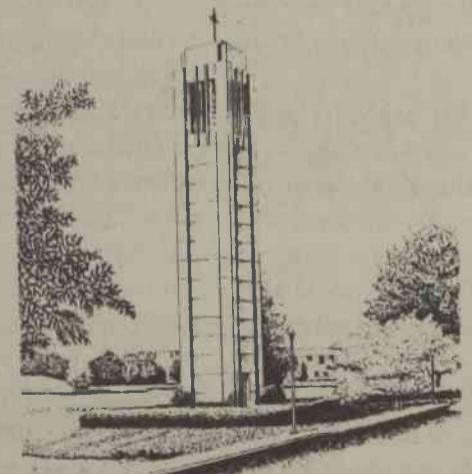
Although I had partial experience from a summer stint in Maxton, the Winter Term brought with it added opportunity and responsibility. My duties were split between completing

a project selected by my supervisor and assisting the ongoing activities of the department. The Systems Department, unique to the Maxton Plant, is a group made up of a facilitator, engineer, statistician, and a manager, which oversees numerous responsibilities of the facility. Among these various projects are developing control limits, designing flow charts and supervising the several task forces and quality circles.

My specific project was to develop a control system for correcting out of control situations on each of the filling lines. This involved interpreting Net Weight charts, designing a macro on Lotus Symphony, to generate a

weekly report to be distributed to involved parties, and developing a chart for Statistical Quality Control, operators to input data into the macro. This system is to be implemented later this spring or summer.

However short four weeks may be to learn from a business entity, my stay at Campbell Soup can be deemed successful. The employees at Maxton are friendly, hard working, and participative. Campbell's philosophy of employee involvement and quality has made them the most recognizable ready-to-eat producer in the world. Hopefully, I will be able to experience this on a permanent basis.



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