Summer Internship Report 2017

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Hometown: Dallas, Texas

Office of U. S. Congressman Pete Sessions
Washington, D.C.

Provide an overview of the organization/research project and a summary of your responsibilities, tasks, and/or projects.

I performed a variety of tasks for the Office of Congressman Pete Sessions (TX-32), including responding to constituent mail and telephone calls, attending and reporting on committee hearings, conducting tours of the Capitol Building, and carrying out administrative tasks for the office.

During your internship, what did you accomplish or how did you make a difference? In what ways did you grow in your professional and technical skills?

Constituent correspondence is a very important part of the legislative process, especially since those are the people who elect representatives to their office. It allows voters to voice their opinions on any topic to their representative. This is important because representatives use that information to help their decision making process. The Interns in the office were the first people that constituents reached when trying to contact the representative. It was our duty to pass along their information to the Congressman so that he may vote in a way that represents Texas' 32nd district.

Describe a problem that you helped to solve at your internship. What skills or knowledge from your education at Sewanee helped you address the problem?

While giving tours of the Capitol Building to constituents, I drew from my history knowledge from courses taken at Sewanee to give facts about the building and how it ties into our nation's history.

In what way were your teamwork skills strengthened?

Most certainly. While Congress is in session, the office is very busy. It results in a very fluidly-structured work day in that each day is different. This is because at any moment, you could be called upon to report on a hearing that starts in ten minutes or to go run documents to the rules committee office. You have to be flexible and put the Office and the district/first-- even if that means
dropping what you are doing and coming back to it later. You learn to coordinate with the other interns to make the office as efficient as possible and ensure business gets done.

**How did your internship affect your career plans?**
Though I enjoyed my internship, I do not see myself returning to the Hill to pursue a career in politics. Finding out what you don't want to do is just as important as finding what it is that you really want to do.

**In what ways did your internship cause you to encounter people of different backgrounds from your own? What steps did you take to communicate effectively with such persons? What did you learn from such persons' perspectives?**
First off, Congress is composed of representatives from all over the US. Most of the interns are from their respective constituencies so I was able to converse and interact with people from all over the US in that regard. In my own office, we had a student from India as well as other students from all over the US. Two interns were placed in our office by the Rocky Mountain Black Conservatives, a relatively new non-for-profit that places black conservatives in conservative representatives' office. DC is a "melting pot" of cultures and I certainly encountered people from other backgrounds than my own congressional district.

**Words of thanks to your internship funding donors:**
Your generous donations allowed me to have a such a special opportunity and experience! I cannot begin to thank you enough! I learned so much, saw some special things, and was impacted by my time spent in DC this summer. Now more than ever, we need bright minds and new ideas in public service. I want to thank you for your efforts to put bright Sewanee students on the Hill or in other forms of public service. YOUR GENEROSITY MADE/MAKES A DIFFERENCE!

**Words of advice for future interns (housing, transportation, etc.)?**
GWU is the easiest and cheapest option. However, due to excessive fire alarms, I would consider living elsewhere if I were to spend time in DC again.