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

I interned with the Peace Corps, in the Office of Overseas Programming & Training Support (OPATS), and they are responsible for providing training, programming, monitoring and evaluation, and knowledge management to support Peace Corps programs worldwide. The office is divided into three units: Training, Programming & Evaluation, and Knowledge & Learning. Specialists in each of these units are engaged in analyzing needs, designing solutions, developing educational materials, and implementing staff development to better support currently serving Volunteers in meeting the Peace Corps’ three goals which are helping the people of host countries in meeting their need for trained men and women, helping to promote a better understanding of Americans on the part of the peoples served, and helping promote a better understanding of other peoples on the part of Americans. I was primarily working with the Language team and the intercultural competence and diversity and inclusion team (ICD&I). I had a large ongoing projects with each of these teams during my time at Peace Corps. For the language team I was compiling all the language resources that Peace Corps houses, which is upwards of 500 different languages and thousands of resources. With the compiled language materials they are planning to create a website that will allow these great language learning tools to be accessed by all. For the ICD&I team I edited and subtitled ten videos, so that they would be equally available in different languages and culturally appropriate for different countries. I also had several other small projects, such as translating materials into French, or training feedback from French to English.
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?

During my internship I was able to complete projects that will be used by Peace Corps volunteers everyday, and through that impact a large community world wide. The language project I completed will allow volunteers to have greater access to the languages that are spoken in their communities, which will in turn promote better understanding and a greater success in completing their goals and projects for the communities. The project I completed for ICD&I will allow the training’s (On race, gender, and sexuality) to better reach the greater audience, and promote diversity and inclusion in many communities worldwide. My professional and technical skills were both challenged during my internship. I learned to work with new software, engage in different languages, communicate with different cultures and work between teams on projects. My technical and professional skills were most challenged when communicating with trainers in other cultures, on how best to translate and edit the video for their local culture. I had to learn to remain professional while attempting to grasp what they needed and expected and I pushed myself technically figuring out how to apply their expectations.

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?

The greatest problem I encountered during my internship was learning how to communicate effectively across teams, languages, and cultures. Sewanee, much like within the Peace Corps, is comprised of people from across the United States and the world. At Sewanee I had to learn how to communicate between coaches, work study supervisors, and professors. And during my internship I was able to apply this knowledge to communicate professionally. Just like there are many different viewpoints at Sewanee, on various subjects, the Peace Corps amplifies this. I was grateful to be able to apply this awareness while learning to work with individuals that had a common goal but many different viewpoints on how to accomplish it.

In what way were your teamwork skills strengthened?

My teamwork skills were most strengthened while working between Peace Corps teams. The greatest strengthening experience being working between the language team and the tech team. The language team wanted to find a way to upload many of the language materials I compiled, and the tech team was unable to assist me in uploading them as the file size for many of the files was too large. In the end we were able to create zip files, which allowed us to upload all the language materials.

How did your internship affect your career plans?

Before this internship I had very little idea on what I wanted to do after Sewanee, other than that I wanted to do something international. I have now narrowed down my international interests and have a much better idea of my plans post Sewanee. I’ve been looking into International Law programs and well as grad schools with Linguistic graduate programs.

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?

There wasn’t a moment at Peace Corps where I wasn’t interacting with someone of a different background. On an hourly basis I was communicating with people in different offices, working with different teams, from different countries, and in different languages. It was one of the most challenging aspects of my internship, at the same time as being the most rewarding. I learned that patience is a huge part in communicating effectively across cultures and backgrounds, there will be miscommunications but patience and understanding are the best way to, in the end, effectively