

Summer Internship Report 2017

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Hometown: Shrewsbury, MA



**Duke University Talent
Identification Program
Athens, Georgia**

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

I was employed by Duke University for their Talent Identification Program, which is an academic summer camp for gifted students. I worked at their University of Georgia site in Athens, Georgia. My position in this program was a residential counselor. My role focused on the campers' social development, by being a role model and mentor as well as organizing and running activities to benefit their social and physical well being. Some of the things I did in a day included: planning and delivering daily activities, organizing large weekend activities, and continuing to create an overall sense of community.

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?

Working directly with students at camp is so much more than getting a task done, or marking a check on a list of to-do's, it is building meaningful relationships, and creating a space for them to be comfortable in as they grow. I truly believe that the joy from camp does not come from doing an activity, it is from the laughs shared, interpersonal relationships built and hardships overcome with each other. The campers will look back in a couple months or years and may not remember exactly what they did, but they will remember how camp made them feel. I am able to make that difference by giving my love to them, holding them when they are crying, or sharing food and talking about life. Being only 4 or 5 years older than the campers, I found that there was a balance between being an authority figure as well as a "sister" figure but once I found that balance, it strengthened my relationships with the campers.

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?

Sewanee has allowed me to practice speaking up when I have questions or have further comments through its small and many times, interactive class sizes. There was one day during camp I had to accompany a camper to Urgent Care because he had been getting constant nosebleeds. While in the waiting room, I researched online and read about the possible solutions. When the doctor finally came to see us, he sat the camper down, and gave us a long lecture about the anatomy of nosebleeds. After this long speech, he said, “my advice is to hold the tissue and apply pressure for at least 20 minutes”. I could not believe that we would be sent away with nothing but some advice that was common sense. I replied that there surely could be more he could do for the nosebleed, that I had read about the silver nitrate applications or swabs. We happily left with silver nitrate swabs.

In what way were your teamwork skills strengthened?

My teamwork skills were strengthened by co-leading an activity that I had never done before with someone who had also never done it before. One day, a counselor and I decided to co-lead an activity that would extract the DNA from a banana. This was an activity that was suggested to us by an instructor, and since neither of us had done it before, we had to search for the activity instructions, gather the supplies needed and figure out how we were going to run the activity. We figured out a system where one person would read the instructions, while the other would demonstrate the process and have students mimic them.

How did your internship affect your career plans?

My career goal is to become a high school counselor. At this camp, I worked with 9th-11th graders. At the conclusion of this internship, I am still confident that this is the career I want to pursue.

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?

Although these kids were only 4 or 5 years younger than me, this age gap was certainly a barrier between myself and the campers. Not only did they have different interests, they also experience stress and pressures as high achieving students. Because these kids are the top performers, one thing they do is carry that stress with them, even to summer camp. My group of girls were rising juniors in high school and were already stressed about colleges. I advised them to remember to take care of themselves, to take breaks from worrying about everything college related, take time to do things that they are find joy and passion in, to enjoy time in the present.

Words of advice for future interns (housing, transportation, etc.)?

This job truly gives you a taste of what life is like being a mom. You have to wake up at 7 in the morning, eat breakfast with them, support their emotional, social, mental and physical health, tell them to drink water and eat vegetables, take care of them when they are sick etc. This job requires energy or the ability to “fake it till you make it”. It is so mentally and physically exhausting, but it is so rewarding to make connections with the campers and see their enjoyment of the camp program.

Words of thanks to your internship funding donors:

To the Sewanee Alum that supported my application when I applied for the first time my freshman year, thank you.