

Summer Internship Report 2017

Adrienne Davis, C'18

Hometown: Dallas, Texas



**U.S. Dept. of Commerce,
Economic Development
Administration
Washington, D.C.**

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

This summer I had the privilege of working at the United States Department of Commerce in the Economic Development Administration. At EDA, I was able to work with the Economic Development Integration (EDI) team, as well as in the Office of the Assistant Secretary. The Economic Development Administration's ultimate goal is to create jobs and sustainable economic growth. In order to do this, EDA awards strategic grants and investments to diversify local economies and attract private investment.

In my first summer project, I compiled information and drafted State overview pages for EDA's Fiscal Year 2017 Annual Report to Congress highlighting grant success stories. During my work with the Economic Development Integration team, I edited and provided feedback on EDI's Regional Economic Diversification Summit guide book, which seeks to assist regional EDA offices in coordinating resources in their respective areas. In addition, I attended their bi-annual conference linking Headquarters to regional offices in order to discuss success and challenges faced in integrating federal resources. I also worked on a grant project revising a database of federal resources available to grant applicants that should be publicly available soon.

Throughout my time in the Office of the Assistant Secretary, I briefed the Special Advisor on press coverage EDA projects had received, as well as other relevant policy topics, on a bi-weekly basis. I assisted the Office with their weekly reports to Secretary of Commerce Wilbur Ross, detailing the success of various EDA grants and investments. In addition, I worked on EDA's August newsletter, updating the bureau on various administration undertakings and highlights. Lastly, I worked on

compiling biographies of relevant board members on EDA's National Advisory Council on Innovation and Entrepreneurship, as well as drafting a briefing book on the Council.

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?

Under Trump's May budget proposal, the administration recommended eliminating the Economic Development Administration, citing the grants awarded by the agency as duplicative of other economic development grant programs available in the Federal Government. In the second half of my internship, I was assigned to work on weekly reports to Secretary of Commerce Wilbur Ross detailing the accomplishments of EDA. Through these reports and my work on EDA's Annual Report to Congress, I helped EDA underscore the importance of the bureau, noting how their development projects fit administration priorities of growing regional economies. In assisting EDA market their success stories and the lasting impacts of their calculated investments, I developed a heightened understanding of government procedures and interactions.

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 Economic Development Integration bureau within the Economic Development Administration is a new office with only about one year of experience. Its main objective is to facilitate collaboration with other federal agencies so that federal money is spent effectively and efficiently. Because many other Federal agencies have grants available for economic development purposes, EDI seeks to coordinate their grant opportunities so that grants are comprehensive and non-duplicative.

Working with other federal agencies has always been a core component of EDA, despite the formal creation of the EDI office just one year ago. However, EDI has encountered difficulty explaining the necessity of their office and their ability to coordinate federal funding opportunities. In order to help solve this problem, I worked on revising and updating the EDI webpage so that potential applicants may better understand the purpose of EDI, and the great asset EDI provides in understanding how to coordinate various grant opportunities. The writing and communication skills I have honed at Sewanee enabled me to help EDI explain their purpose simply and efficiently.

In what way were your teamwork skills strengthened?

While working with the Economic Development Integration team, I worked closely with another Sewanee intern, Baker Walls. The majority of our projects were team assignments, and required us to distribute the workload evenly so as to work most efficiently. After completing our respective workloads, we would share our progress and submit our combined assignments to team leadership.

One specific project required us to examine a 62-page Brookings Report on Philadelphia's strength and weaknesses in developing various sectors of their local economy. Through various rounds of revisions and collaboration, we ultimately created a 6-page summary of the Report, as well as suggestions for how EDA could work with other Federal agencies to make strategic, non-duplicative investments in order to catalyze economic development in the region.

How did your internship affect your career plans?

Through this internship, I solidified my previously tentative plans to pursue a career in law upon my graduation from Sewanee. After speaking with employees at EDA who had pursued a variety of post-graduate degrees, I narrowed down my areas of interest to careers best suited to those with a law degree. I'm drawn to the versatility of pursuing a legal career, as everyone I spoke to informed me

about the various career paths a law degree enables. Because I have a variety of interests I would like to pursue, this was helpful and reassuring advice.

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?

During my internship I had the opportunity to volunteer at the fourth annual SelectUSA Summit, which is a government-sponsored event encouraging foreign direct investment in the United States. The Summit enables foreign investors to learn more about bringing their businesses to the United States, and provides a platform for investors to network with representatives from state and local governments.

Because the Summit is centered around foreign direct investment, I encountered and communicated with participants from all around the globe. I served as a Summit guide, directing participants to various exhibits so they may discuss business operations with state representatives. These varying worldviews about bringing their businesses to the United States was transformative in the way I came to view America as a haven for international opportunities.

Words of thanks to your internship funding donors:

Thank you so much to the wonderful donors that enable Sewanee students to accept these unpaid opportunities. My experience was invaluable in understanding government operations and my future career aspirations, and I cannot thank you enough for your generosity.