

Summer Internship Report 2017

Mary Margaret Frank, C'18

Hometown: Memphis, TN



**New Orleans
Business Alliance - 504ward
New Orleans, LA**

(Mary Margaret is in the middle)

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

This summer I was given the opportunity to work alongside the Executive Director, Mary Matthews, of a non-profit called 504ward. 504ward's mission is to keep and bring young professional talent in the city of New Orleans. Their primary goal is to connect young professionals to key individuals, events, and opportunities to help them thrive, as well as New Orleans grow as a city. I supported Mary with the organization and coordination of events, researched the impact of the company's presence on social media, and gathered the content of interest to the target demographic. During the few events 504ward held this summer, I served as the volunteer coordinator and made sure the event went smoothly.

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 felt that I made an impact on 504ward's social media presence and the city of New Orleans. When attending the young professional events I helped organize and coordinate, I had the ability to talk to the attendees about their experience, and I shared this feedback with Mary. It gave me the satisfaction of knowing my efforts in planning a successful event were valuable to others.

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?

Before an event one weekend downtown, the weather was not cooperating, and the streets of New Orleans flooded. Most of the volunteers were unable to leave their houses and arrive in time for setup. I had to make sure everything was in order before the start of the event. With no extra hands, Mary, Kathryn, and I worked as quickly as possible to make sure we flipped the Louisiana Children's Museum into the 504ward Connections Party in time due to the circumstances.

In what way were your teamwork skills strengthened?

During 504ward's annual White Linen Connection Party, I strengthened my teamwork skills during the setup and break down. It would not have been possible to set up our event in the hour time span we had without working with one another. I learned that numerous unsaid tasks needed completion; therefore, I helped to finish them. When every individual did their part and worked as a team, setup and breakdown went smoothly and quickly.

How did your internship affect your career plans?

After I graduate in the fall, I plan to pursue an event coordination career and to incorporate economic development. Every work day, I noticed our company was making an impact on the city of New Orleans. I enjoyed seeing the result of all the hard work our company put into the different projects. This internship has affected my career path because I want to feel the same satisfaction I did this summer.

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?

I encountered people of many different backgrounds when attending connection events. There were young professionals who were born in New Orleans and also many from all over the United States who moved there. I learned about their different career paths and aspirations. In one of my weekly posts on Instagram- Talent Tuesday - I would interview a young professional and spotlight he or she on social media. Through Talent Tuesday, I learned and communicated with individuals from different backgrounds. Each professional wanted to help change New Orleans for the better be it through health care, nonprofits or education.

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

Future interns should make use of public transportation to save money.

Words of thanks to your internship funding donors:

I really enjoyed my internship this summer and the experience will be one that I will remember for life. I would not have been able to live in New Orleans without your help and I am very grateful! It was a wonderful opportunity and I am glad I was given the chance to work in New Orleans.