

Summer Internship Report 2017

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Hometown: Alexandria, Louisiana



Accenture Washington, D.C.

(James is pictured on the far left)

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

Accenture is a leading global company, providing a broad range of services and solutions in strategy, consulting, digital, technology and operations. With clients in more than 40 industries throughout over 120 countries, Accenture is a driving force of innovation that improves the way the world works and lives.

My internship with Accenture focused on the services of consulting and strategy. Consulting works to design and implement transformative business solutions that help the world's leading companies build for the future. Strategy shapes their clients' future by combining keen business insight with an acute understanding of how technology will impact industry and business models.

Though I worked on several projects during my internship with Accenture, my main project was within a division of Accenture Strategy called Accenture Development Partnerships (ADP). ADP works with leading international development organizations to address the world's social, economic, and environmental issues. They help their clients develop sustainable, innovative, and market-based solutions to maximize value while driving measurable impact. During my internship, I worked as part of a five-person ADP team tasked with designing and implementing the strategy transformation of an international NGO. My role within the project concentrated on the areas of change management and project management, including responsibilities such as the following: creating/updating org charts and presentation slides; drafting "instillation" and "realization" metric descriptions; data tracking; providing status updates; note-taking during meetings with the client's executive leadership team;

assisting with client communication and events; and co-creating an internal promotional video explaining the organization's transformation.

I also had the opportunity to work on two other projects. One project focused on the student experience at postsecondary institutions. For this project, I brought knowledge from my previous academic research and experience as an advocate for people with disabilities to the project's team, and together we crafted a "persona" for students with learning disabilities in the collegiate setting. The materials I created will be utilized in current and future partnerships with clients working in the field of higher education.

For a different project, I also created a promotional video for Accenture's Metro D.C. high school internship opportunities.

During my internship, I also had the opportunity to enhance my mentorship skills. This aspect of my internship included me speaking on panels and helping lead exercises at two different workshops for Accenture's high school interns and the newest recipients of the Economic Club scholarships for graduating seniors from D.C. public schools. Additionally, I created a promotional video highlighting Accenture's internship opportunities for students from public high schools in the D.C. metropolitan area.

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?

Throughout out my internship, I improved my ability to identify root causes, critical linkages, and key trends; understand stakeholder engagement and partnerships; utilize advanced systems, processes, and tools; and design and implement innovative yet pragmatic solutions.

Additionally, I strengthened my ability to communicate ideas by working at advanced levels with several types of software including Adobe Premiere Pro, Excel, and PowerPoint. I also grew in my ability to anticipate issues; voice concerns; consider alternate perspectives and approaches; track change; design metrics; and incorporate seemingly disparate concepts into cohesive solutions.

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?

After speaking to a leader at Accenture about my research on the policies and practices regarding disabilities in the realm of higher education, I was given the opportunity to look at the materials from an ongoing project focused on the student experience in postsecondary institutions. Of the student "personas" the team had developed, a perspective representing the experience of students with learning disabilities had yet to be included. By utilizing the research I had conducted at Sewanee during the year prior, I was able to develop a persona for students with learning disabilities. Developing those materials allowed me the opportunity to not only contribute to the project in a significant way, but also to see a direct impact of my academic research on policy and practice in the field of higher education.

In what way were your teamwork skills strengthened?

My teamwork skills were mainly strengthened in the area of effective communication. All of the work I did as part of different teams for Accenture inextricably tied to effective communication. Throughout my internship experience, I developed a much deeper understanding of how to

communicate, when to communicate, how often to communicate, and what to communicate across a variety of situations.

How did your internship affect your career plans?

After the conclusion of my internship, I was offered a full-time position as a Consulting Analyst for Accenture (which I have now accepted). I would not have even considered a job in consulting had I not interned with Accenture. However, because of my internship, I was able to realize that working in consulting with Accenture will encompass a multitude of aspects that I associate with my ideal career. At Accenture, I will be able to engage all of my top interests and skills in a way that creates an immediate impact within industries.

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?

Accenture was the first environment I had ever experienced that holistically embodied inclusivity and diversity. These values could be easily seen and felt through all of the company's people, policies, and practices. The company's culture provided me my opportunity to openly live as my authentic self, a transgender man, and not worry about my safety as a result of doing so. Diversity is not merely tolerated at Accenture; it is seen as an asset. My experience with inclusion and diversity during my internship at Accenture was immensely impactful in that it has given me the confidence to continue to embrace my identity and live as an out transman now that I have returned to Sewanee.

Words of thanks to your internship funding donors:

Thank you so much for the opportunity to intern with Accenture! Because of this internship, I have been able to enter my senior year already having signed the contract to begin my ideal career as soon as I graduate. Without the funding you provided, I unquestionably would not have been able to take the internship, and as a result, would most likely not have the career opportunities ahead of me that I now do. Thank you so much!