

## Summer Internship Report 2017

### **Paige Klump, C'18**

Hometown: Golden, Colorado



### **Mercer Capital Memphis, Tennessee**

*(Paige is on the left)*

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

Mercer is a mid-size financial services firm, with about 40 people in the Memphis office and a smaller office in Dallas. Although interns are assigned an industry and synced up with a mentor in that industry who guides you through your projects, you have the chance to meet everyone in the office and learn about what goes on on a day-to-day basis. I worked in the energy/ oil and gas industry and my main tasks over the summer were to create industry focused content (blog posts, research papers, quarterly updates) and help create two Excel valuation templates for energy companies.

**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?**

I felt like all of the tasks I was given this summer were meaningful which was a really great aspect of this internship. The energy team, as well as the other professionals at Mercer, were great about communicating the purpose behind each project, so I never felt like the work I was doing was busy work. Throughout the summer, I was able to develop skills and gain hands-on experience that will definitely benefit me in my future career. In the beginning of the internship, we received training on various databases and platforms and towards the middle of the summer, we were able to sit in on some of the first year analysts' training sessions once they began in mid-July. Through these trainings and my projects, I gained experience with Excel, Capital IQ, and Bloomberg and was exposed to various valuation methods.

**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 most challenging task I had this summer was to create valuation templates for energy companies with the industry team. For one of the templates, we needed to develop a way to input an enormous

amount of data, aggregate it, and sort it so that an analyst could focus on certain inputs. Although I was given past projects to use as examples, there wasn't a great example of this. Pulling from past class experiences, particularly from statistical modeling, I was able to understand what the problem was and think through the process linearly in order to propose an effective solution. Ultimately, we ended with a model that spread over four sheets and incorporated a pivot table that I had been exposed to in both a finance and accounting course.

**In what way were your teamwork skills strengthened?**

The majority of the projects I worked on this summer were individual until I brought the finished product back to the energy team to review. As such, I was able to develop strategies to manage multiple long-term projects at once and strengthened my ability to prioritize tasks given various deadlines. In regard to teamwork skills, the five interns were expected to present at the annual meeting towards the end of July. While we were all tasked with individually explaining what we had been doing throughout the summer, as a group we had to coordinate, among other things, the introduction, order, and conclusion of the presentation. However, while we were preparing for the presentation we each had other outstanding projects and deadlines that did not allow us to devote our time completely to the task at hand. As such, we were each able to hone our teamwork skills throughout this process, as it was imperative that we communicated openly about other deadlines and expectations for each other.

**How did your internship affect your career plans?**

My experience with Mercer confirmed that I was on the right career path and that I want to work in finance. I found that I really enjoyed the size of the office and the diversity of tasks that the analysts do on a daily basis. Given the opportunity I would love to return to Mercer, but regardless, my experience this summer taught me about what to look for in a potential employer.

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

I absolutely loved my time at Mercer and in Memphis and would love to talk with anyone thinking about applying for this internship. Memphis is a growing city, and it was so much fun to be there during the summer. I ended up living downtown, but a lot of interns lived in Midtown, which is around Rhodes. There are quite a few Sewanee grads working at Mercer full time, and everyone was extremely welcoming. I could not recommend this internship more.

**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?**

Within Mercer I encountered people of different academic backgrounds, talents and strengths. I worked with four other interns, and while we were all obviously interested in finance, I thought it was interesting to hear about everyone's past experiences, classes and specific interests. We each had a unique skillset coming into the summer, and were exposed to different things throughout the internship, so at the end of the summer when we had a little extra time we ended up teaching each other things in Excel, Capital IQ, and Bloomberg. I thought it was really useful to work with interns from different schools as it gave me the opportunity to not only learn from the analysts I was working with, but to learn from my peers as well.

**Words of thanks to your internship funding donors:**

My time with Mercer far surpassed my expectations, and I am extremely grateful to have had this opportunity. Thank you all for working with me this summer!