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

Episcopal Relief & Development has been working for the past 75 years to provide humanitarian aid in over 40 countries around the world. This summer, I got to experience the organization as the marketing and communications intern. I worked closely with the marketing department and communications officer on both individual and department projects. Much of my independent work involved drafting and editing website content, including writing a number of my own press releases, as well as a blog. I also worked with members of the marketing team in planning and budgeting ad packages, as well as analyzing the progress and effectiveness of current content and campaigns.

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?

One of the most important duties of any nonprofit is to give the public an accurate view of its work, and through marketing and communications I felt that I was able to constructively and effectively do this. Since a number of my projects involved creating press releases and website content about the organization's work, I collaborated with program officers and used trip resources to present the information honestly and accurately. I learned a number of digital platforms for sharing content and updating the website, as well as tools to analyze content like Google Analytics and Sprout Social.
Professionally, I learned to communicate effectively with my supervisors, colleagues and a wider audience while maintaining our organization's brand.

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?
During the last week of my internship, which also happened to be my supervisor's last week at the organization, the marketing and communications team was extremely pressed for time and facing the pressure of the turnover period due to additional circumstances. For most of the week, I was able to work independently and completed one of the biggest projects of the summer and we finished everything on the very last day. Because of learning how to problem-solve and work efficiently over my last three years at Sewanee, I was able to lighten the workloads of my colleagues, and complete an important project for the organization.

In what way were your teamwork skills strengthened?
Throughout my internship, I worked with a number of different members of the marketing and communications department and the entire organization. One of my main projects involved updating the organization's website with current content - to do this I was collaborating not only with members of my own department, but also with Program Officers who lead our programs abroad and in the United States. I learned how important it was to set deadlines and be respectful and aware of other employees’ busy schedules - they have plenty on their plates as well. Thanks to them, the project was completed successfully and on time, and I learned invaluable skills for collaborating professionally.

How did your internship affect your career plans?
My colleagues and supervisors were extremely helpful in offering advice and equipping me for a future career, and what I learned at Episcopal Relief & Development I will take with me to my next job. I will certainly consider a career in marketing, among other fields, and the technical and professional skills I learned are applicable in many jobs I am interested. I also loved living in New York City, and intend to pursue a job there following graduation.

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?
One of the biggest challenges this summer was learning to collaborate with coworkers with whom I entirely disagreed. There were a number of projects - both individual and team projects - during which my colleagues and I had opposite views on the process and outcomes. These experiences proved rather frustrating for me, but provided the opportunity for me to step back and evaluate the other's perspective. Over the course of the summer, I was humbled to realize how much I had to learn from those with whom I disagreed. The people who had frustrated me at first became some of my greatest mentors.

Words of advice for future interns (housing, transportation, etc.)?
Living in NYC is a great experience, and a lot of that depends on where you live. I chose to sublet an apartment rather than use university housing, which I highly recommend if you are given the opportunity. Living close to where you work and having good roommates are two of the best things you can do, and will vastly improve your experience. Transportation in New York can be unpleasant, and roommates you don't get along with can really ruin and unnecessarily complicate your living situation. Living in a city like New York provides invaluable opportunities to try new things and branch out, but it's nice to have a comfortable home when you're in a new place.
Words of thanks to your internship funding donors:

This internship, and the funding that made it possible, provided me with an incredible learning opportunity and was a significant step towards the career I hope for. I truly appreciate the donors who made funding possible and gave me an experience I will carry with me into my career and beyond. Getting to live in New York City for a summer and participate in meaningful work is something I will treasure, and I hope it's something I can contribute to for interns in the future.