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

Camp Capers is a summer camp run by the Episcopal Diocese of West Texas for children ages 8 to 18. My internship partner from Sewanee, Ali Egan, and I formed the Land Management and Restoration Team. Our job was to teach an environmental education program in the garden each morning, work on self-determined projects around the property, as well as lifeguard, facilitate the ropes course, temporarily substitute for counselors, and other duties as needed.

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?

As the Land Management Team, Ali and I had to choose a couple big projects to work on throughout the summer. One of the projects we chose was to landscape and beautify the Saint Francis Chapel. This was a significant project, because to the community of Camp Capers, the chapel is the most beloved building on the property. Campers attend a morning and an evening service every day, so the chapel is one of the most intimate spaces on camp. Most of the buildings on the property have been drastically remodeled and rebuilt, and Ali and I were told that attempts to landscape the chapel had been made by previous interns, but so far nothing had been very long-lasting. Therefore, Ali and I wanted to create a plan that would honor the personal attachment of the community as well as meet the environmentally sustainable challenges of the landscape. By the final week, Ali and I had rearranged and mortared together a previously disheveled rock wall of one of the three flower beds in front of the chapel. A fellow employee Anne, helped us immensely by power washing the inside stone floor of the chapel as well as the stone pathway leading up to the chapel. After Ali and I weeded the beds and mortared the wall of the main flower bed, with the help of one of the directors named Jacob, we put in top soil, planted the plants, and covered the beds with mulch. Frank the handyman
helped us out tremendously with operating the heavy equipment to transport the soil. Before this internship, I could never have said that I helped build a wall or landscaped anything.

**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?**

Ali and I noticed that the camp owned recycling bins and had placed them around the property. However, the blue 32 gallon bins were being used more as trashcans than as recycling stations, so Ali and I proposed that we buy some new double-bin recycling units to make disposing unwanted items in either the trash or mixed recyclables section combined into one convenient location. Sewanee's campus has a great recycling program with many bins placed conveniently around campus. Also, I remember the Green House and the Think Outside the Bottle campaign raised a lot of reduce-reuse-recycle awareness. Essentially, Ali and I were able to use Sewanee's recycling program as a model for our plan for Camp Capers.

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

Working at a summer camp means that there are a range of different groups of people with differing ages. There are the campers who are ages 8 to 18, the girls quad and the boys quad counselors who just finished their freshman or sophomore year of college, the session counselors who serve as co-counselors who recently graduated high school, work crew who recently graduated high school, the program staff which includes the Land Management Team whose members ranged from 19 to 26 years old, and the directors of the camp who are ten to twenty years older than everyone else. Therefore, working together with everyone was challenging at times and it was essential to figure out how to communicate with each group of people, usually taking into consideration the differences in age.

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

My time at Camp Capers did not make me want to become a camp counselor. However, Camp Capers helped me make connections with intelligent and experienced directors and also helped me put some roots down within the grand network of the Episcopal Diocese of West Texas. Working as a Land Management intern and teaching hands-on environmental education lessons reaffirmed my path as a teacher and really strengthened some of the teaching skills that I had gained in courses and volunteer work at Sewanee.

**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 weeks at Camp Capers is called Good Sam Week or Good Samaritan Week. This week is different from the Senior High, Junior High, Intermediate, and Primary weeks, because it is a mixture of all the age groups. The way Good Sam Week works is that students are selected because of their excellent academic work in school and rewarded to attend one week at Camp Capers for being good Samaritans. Most of these students tend to live in the inner-city areas of San Antonio, and a majority of the children are Hispanic or black. Because these children come from low-income families, the Good Samaritan Center of San Antonio raises money to send a group of children to camp and provides them with clothes, towels, water bottles, and other essential items. Though this group of children came from a different financial situation at home or had different colored skin than the majority of campers that attend during the other weeks at Camp Capers, they were simply beautiful children like all the other kids that attend camp throughout the summer.
Words of advice for future interns (housing, transportation, etc.)?
Because I lived so far away, I decided to fly to San Antonio. Camp Capers was able to reimburse my airfare, and they arranged for someone to pick me up from the airport. The rooms Ali and I lived in were part of the lodges which were separate from the cabins in which the counselors and campers lived. The lodge rooms had two closets, two queen-sized beds, two bedside tables, one desk, an A/C unit, and one bathroom. Also, I asked if someone could lend me some towels, a sleeping bag (for the three camping trips), and bed sheets so I did not have to pack them in my suitcase. The laundry room was equipped with four dryers and four washers with automatically dispensing detergent and softener. Also, you have the week of the Fourth of July as vacation.

Words of thanks to your internship funding donors:
Thank you so much for the opportunity to work at a place like Camp Capers. I learned so much about environmental education, horticulture, landscaping, my spiritual growth, and my teaching abilities, and I got to meet many great children and adults.