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

I spent eight weeks interning at Kemble Interiors, an interior design firm with offices in New York City and Palm Beach, Florida. My days consisted of organizing materials in the design library, assisting designers with schemes, visiting the Design and Decoration building, and going with designers to visit client's homes. As a long-term project, the interns were charged with updating the whole design library, which required contacting vendors to figure out which materials in our library were discontinued. The interns, including myself, worked on this comprehensive project when we weren't needed for other projects. During this process, I became very familiar with the many resources and vendors that interior designers use. The best part of the internship was feeling so involved in the office--the designers made a conscious effort to involve us in their projects and frequently asked us for our inputs and opinions.

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 tasks given to me was to enter clientele information into an online system that keeps each client project organized. The information put into this system includes the pricing of each item for each room that would need to eventually be purchased for the client. These items could be a rug, a table, a lamp, wall paper, or fabric. After adding items to the system, I then was responsible for finding the net price and stock of the items. Each category (i.e. furniture, hardware, fabric) has a general mark up percentage used to figure out the amount the client would play for that item. This online tool showed me how important it is to keep things organized.
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?

One of the many things Sewanee has taught me is the importance of teamwork. One of the designers noticed that the price of some hardware charged to their account did not match the information on the invoice. I helped by calling the vendor to understand why the charges did not match. This situation took patience and effective communication, both skills that are encouraged and developed at Sewanee.

In what way were your teamwork skills strengthened?

There were three interns in the office including myself. My teamwork skills were strengthened when one of the designers would ask us to pick out a fabric that matched the rest of their scheme for a certain project. The three of us each had different creative tastes, but we were able to come up with something that we all liked that could be presented to the designer. Sometimes the designers would occasionally ask us to do more than one task at a time, so we divided and conquered. For example, one of us went to FedEx to drop off a package, one of us stayed in the library to continue organizing, and one of us looked through catalogs to find furniture for a client’s home.

How did your internship affect your career plans?

Interning with Kemble Interiors heightened my interest in interior design but also made it clear to me that I have much more to learn. After graduating from Sewanee, my goal is to attend design school in order to reach a higher level of expertise in the design industry. I plan to learn how to use computer programs like AutoCAD, Photoshop, and SketchUp. Being around successful individuals with similar interests to my own was extremely inspiring and made me excited to see what my future career holds.

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?

It was interesting to learn how each designer got to where they are now. Some of them attended design school and some did not. The designers who did not attend design school (or not yet) taught themselves the necessary skills that are often crucial to know in the industry. I found it enlightening to see the different paths the designers had taken to become interior designers.

Words of thanks to your internship funding donors:

Thank you so much for your generous gift to Sewanee students. I can’t explain how grateful I am to attend a school that funds educational opportunities outside of school.