

**Summer Internship Report 2017**

**Virginia Rayder, C'19**

Hometown: Chevy Chase, Maryland



**Center for the Study of the  
Presidency and Congress  
Washington, D.C.**

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

The Center for the Study of the Presidency and Congress is a non-profit think tank that focuses on different policy and world issues that are particularly pertinent in the present, or that will be in the future. This summer at CSPC we were focusing on a few different projects including Small Business Procurement, Cybersecurity, and Autonomous Vehicles (driverless cars). As an intern, I was given research assignments and projects on these different larger projects and was expected to create an outline that would be used from the knowledge collected on each issue.

**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?**

The research that I was conducting was used to create talking points and an outline of what the Center wanted to focus on for each project they were conducting. This research was used in the Roundtable conversations that the Center held on each issue, where members of our team at the center, business executives, congressmen, legislators, and others who would be interested in the particular issue, have insight to offer, or would be effective toward pushing favorable policy, would meet to discuss and form a favorable solution. The Center later publishes their findings in a briefing. I was put in charge of conducting important research that was crucial to the goal the Center was trying to achieve. I had to be meticulous and timely in my research and developed higher level and more effective research skills that I will take back with me to Sewanee and beyond. I also had to keep up with current events which I felt helped me learn more about the world and helped me develop an interest in the news.

**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?**

Sewanee teaches us how to read and write, which are two arts that seem to be falling behind. The work we were doing at my internship was intensive in both of these areas and I felt that the skills I

have learned in not just my English classes, but in all of my classes at Sewanee, enabled me to help my fellow interns when it came to writing reports on our research.

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

I was working with at least five different interns at each point of the summer and we were required to be a team and communicate with each other. As interns, we were required to answer the phones. While we had a schedule worked out for us, sometimes someone would be out of the office or need to take a break and it was our job to find a cover and work it out among ourselves as to who would be responsible for covering the phone. Sometimes, we were given several large projects and it was up to us to figure out who would do which project or how to break up one project among several of us.

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

I am an English major and I am still figuring out what I want to do exactly. This internship gave me exposure to the non-profit world, research based work, and editing, which I have become particularly interested in, through the papers the CSPC fellows write each year to be published. This was my first office job so I learned what it is like to have a desk job and to be at the office from nine to five everyday. I also learned what it is like to be a good boss, employee, and part of a larger team through the CSPC, especially by the example of Max Angerholzer (CEO) and Hurst Renner (VP for External Affairs & Board of Relations), who both graduated from 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?**

Although there was quite a Sewanee presence in our office with two Sewanee interns and several members on staff and the board of trustees, there were interns and CSPC staff from many other places. One of the interns I worked with was from Barcelona. From Gonzalo, I was able to learn about Spain and what it is like to live there and what his perspectives are about America. With so much going on in our country, it was very interesting to hear about commentary on the state of our affairs from an outside perspective.

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

A lot of interns live at GW in the summer and this is a great way to meet new people and it is very centrally located (especially for people interning on Capitol Hill)!!

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

Thank you so much Max and Hurst for making this such a great experience! I had an amazing time working with both of you and am so thankful for my time at CSPC. I truly learned so much.