

**Summer Internship Report 2017**

**Jake Thompson, C'18**

Hometown: Florence, South Carolina



**United States Senator Lindsey Graham  
Washington, D. C.**

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

My work for Senator Graham was mostly what one would expect in a Senator's D.C. office. I would answer the phones and make sure that the voicemails and emails were regularly checked and logged. Along with that I would make sure the office was set up in the mornings and taken down in the evenings each day. A project, if one would consider it a project, that I took the lead on was training the other interns and new arrivals with giving Capitol tours. I was exceptional at being able to get to know the constituents that came for my tours, talking to them and getting to know them, along with giving them the relevant information about the Capitol building. This became a passion of mine as I was able to not only envelop myself in the history of the Capitol, but also teach the other interns how to be friendly and get to know the people they were giving tours to. Senator Graham and his staff would commend me on my ability at the end of my internship, something that I am exceedingly proud of.

**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?**

This internship was different than the last one I had in D.C. in a variety of ways. Mostly, the office of Senator Graham had a much more serious attitude than the office I worked in previously. That in and of itself taught me how to behave in a serious, professional environment and around people profoundly more important than I was. I made a difference in this environment by working closely with the front office staff to make sure that everything in the office ran as smoothly as possible. An excellent example of this was my work with the constituents giving tours. Moving them efficiently out of the office and returning as quickly as possible taught me both how to be professional, polite, and make sure that the office and the Senator were reflected in a positive light.

**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?**

Most of the internship was relatively smooth sailing and problem free. However, there were times where we had an issue with a constituent that resulted in us having to notify the police. In these scenarios, and there were several, I reacted calmly and made sure that I was around to provide either protection from an in-person threat, or made sure to be there to contact the Capitol Police when it was another form of correspondence. In regards to what I used from Sewanee in these scenarios, I called upon the professionalism that the University has taught me and was able to think clearly through the situation.

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

When I was in my second week of my internship we had a new intern join our office. She immediately proclaimed herself as the "Alpha" intern, making sure she had completed any immediate work before the other interns arrived, often coming in an hour and a half before the rest of the staff. When she became part of the team it taught me to look for other work, and other ways that I could help the office flow and function better. These things included aiding in the training of other interns as they arrived, and working on updating reference sheets. It taught me not to get competitive since we were all on the same team.

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

What this internship did for my career plans was it gave me an excellent resume for a backup plan. My career path right now is to go to law school next fall. If that were to fall through, or if I decide not to immediately begin practicing, I have the credentials to be both a district and a D.C. staffer or Legislative Aid. It also taught me that if I do ever hold public office that I should be overly appreciative of those that are working for me, making my life much easier.

**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?**

I can think of one person in-particular who stands out. A military liaison to our office and I had completely different backgrounds, he was from a city out in Texas and I was from a small town in South Carolina. He had wanted, and spent, most of his life in the military and I had no desire to do that at all. I made a connection with him by asking about his work with the military and what he liked about it. After we had established a dialogue we ended up being rather close and worked much more efficiently together.

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

Working for Senator Graham was one of the honors of my life. He has been a longtime hero of mine and getting to meet him, and getting to know just a little bit about him, meant the world to me. Helping the Senator out in any way I could, even if it was minute in the grand scheme of things, filled me with immense pride. It is not often that one gets to meet his heroes, much less work for one. The experience of being with Senator Graham is one I will never forget. I would like to thank you from the bottom of my heart for the opportunity to meet and work for Senator Graham, it truly means the world to me!