

**Summer Internship Report 2017**

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Hometown: Fayetteville, Tennessee



**All Creatures Veterinary Clinic/  
Fayetteville Animal Clinic  
Manchester, TN/ Fayetteville, TN**

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

This summer I worked at two veterinary clinics, All Creatures Veterinary Clinic and Fayetteville Animal Clinic. All Creatures is a clinic that treats mainly small animals like cats and dogs, but also treats large animals like cattle and horses. In this clinic, I worked with small animals. Here my responsibilities stretched from cleaning cages, to watching and assisting in some aspects of surgery. I helped to keep the clinic running smoothly by filling prescriptions, drawing up vaccines, assisting with X-rays, and assisting the veterinarians with things like holding patients or getting background information from an owner. Fayetteville Animal Clinic is also an established clinic that treats both large and small animals, but here I worked primarily with large animals. I assisted the veterinarians with things like drawing up vaccines, herding cattle, and preparing for surgeries or procedures. Since animals like cattle or horses are much larger and more powerful than small animals and are less likely to be pets or handled as regularly, caution and safety was the number one priority. Because of this I was not able to get as much hands-on experience at this clinic as I did at All Creatures. Here I spent a great deal of time observing the procedures and became familiar with the most common problems seen in farm animals and how to treat them appropriately. Both clinics allowed me to expand my knowledge of the field and receive hands-on experience that has helped me become more confident.

**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 allowed me to truly embrace veterinary medicine as my career path. I have done so much more this summer than I could have possibly imagined. I have become much more confident

in not only my knowledge of veterinary medicine, but also in my abilities to learn and perform in a completely new environment. I could practice new skills and receive feedback to help me improve in things like communicating with owners or managing an animal. One very important skill that I learned during this internship was how to remain calm, caring, and focused in a tough situation. With veterinary medicine, as with all medicine, there comes a time when a patient is in the worst-case scenario. With pets a lot of times, we must humanely euthanize them. I remember the first patient that I brought back to be euthanized. An elderly woman came walking back with her old dog and I could see how upset she was. I placed her in a room and allowed her time to say goodbye. After a while I walked into the room and I told her it was time and she began crying. At this point, I quickly learned how hard it can be to work as a veterinarian. I had to immediately learn how to be calm, caring, and focused all at the same time. I had to be calm for the owner and patient, caring and empathetic in a tough situation, and focused on what was best for the animal. Many of the skills that I learned during this internship cannot be found in a book or video, but must be learned in a real-life situation like this one.

**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?**

A woman brought her cat in one day because he wasn't eating or drinking and had been missing for nearly a week. We gave a thorough exam and ran blood work to determine the problem and then placed the cat in a cage to be observed for the rest of the day. The cat seemed to be fine for several hours so I began to check on him less frequently. After about an hour from the previous time that I had seen him, I went to check on him again and found him panting rapidly and acting very ill. I immediately called the doctor and we decided then to put the cat in a kennel that had oxygen pumping into it. Had we not done this when we did the cat might not have survived since it could not breathe. Knowledge from my biology classes helped me to identify the problem, while skills I have learned like addressing situations, not ignoring them, and taking on a leadership role with the help of the doctor, allowed me to find a solution.

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

Working in a place like a medical clinic means working as a team to fix problems. At a veterinary clinic, teamwork is especially important. My teamwork skills were strengthened in several circumstances, from holding a large upset dog to simply drawing blood from a patient. When handling large animals like a herd of cattle, teamwork is especially essential. Having a plan or idea and being able to communicate that effectively is something that I strengthened during this internship, and these skills can be applied to so many other aspects of my life.

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

Interning at these two clinics solidified my dream of becoming a veterinarian. It has made me even more excited and enthusiastic for the future. I have also become much more serious about veterinary medicine as my career path. I have taken further steps to better prepare myself and am making connections with people who can provide me with information in the future.

**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?**

Every day I met new people as they brought their animals in for treatment and with every animal came a different unique owner. I found that maintaining a positive attitude and remaining patient helped when communicating with owners. Some owners could not afford certain treatments, while

others wanted to do everything possible for their animal. Some did not understand some aspects of the medical field while others were almost too knowledgeable. In these cases, I would ask questions to better clarify their perspective so that I could make the best decision. This allowed everyone to be on the same page and hopefully avoid confusion or frustration. I learned that communicating in a calm and positive manner receives the best feedback from people.

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

I would like to thank you for allowing me to have this opportunity. Becoming a veterinarian has been my dream since I was in elementary school, so working in a clinic this summer was such an exciting experience. Without this grant, I would not have been able to work at two different clinics and receive the incredible amount of information and knowledge that I did. As I work towards vet school, experiences like this internship become more and more important, and after this summer I feel confident that I am on the right track. A quick note about the attached photo, due to water damage on my computer I lost the other photos from my internship, so the one I shared was taken near the end of the summer. The kitten was dropped off at the clinic malnourished with a very low body temperature, so I ended up carrying her around in my pocket for half of the day. I thought that this image, even though not what I had planned, captured one of the heartwarming scenes of veterinary medicine that I love. Thank you so much for giving students like myself the opportunity and resources to solidify career plans through internships. This internship has helped me to get a better understanding of what it takes to become a veterinarian, and I cannot thank you enough for supporting these opportunities.