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

The Economic Development Administration (EDA) is a part of the Department of Commerce with the sole focus of economic development in distressed communities throughout the United States. I worked under the Economic Development Integration Division in the EDA which focused on bringing together funding opportunities and guidance documents from the many different federal agencies to help with nation-wide economic development.

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?

During my internship, I assisted the Integration team by taking notes during the many knowledge exchanges and regional retreats in order for the Integration team to refer back to the many recommendations by economic development experts in order to improve and facilitate the integration of federal funds. I also edited the EDA Annual Report and edited many guidance documents created by the Integration team. Finally, I helped create a brochure regarding integration techniques and information for local/regional developers to integrate the EDA's CEDS plan and the Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) ConPlan in order to limit developing costs of using two plans.

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?

Right when I arrived at my internship, the EDA's annual report was in the process of being edited in order to send to Congress for approval. Thanks to the writing intensive aspect of Sewanee, I was given the opportunity to look over a portion of the Annual Report and edit where I thought needed.
In what way were your teamwork skills strengthened?
During my internship, all of the interns were given the opportunity to brief a group of Japanese economic developers regarding the priorities and developing tools of the EDA. The interns were asked to create a powerpoint presentation as well as present to these developers. The presentation was a great success and working with the other interns really helped strengthen my teamwork skills.

How did your internship affect your career plans?
Working in D.C. was a great experience and I would love to return to this city in order to work full-time. Also, after a knowledge exchange with the EPA, I realized that I may want to focus on a career in sustainable energy, but also realized that I am still very interested in economic development but maybe at the regional level instead of at the headquarters level.

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?
During an integration retreat, many of the regional integrators came to DC in order to talk about furthering the integration division. These integrators were from all over the United States and it was interesting to see how the many different personalities of these integrators were able communicate and how their recommendations were both similar and different in some regards. The many different perspectives made me realize that these integrators from different regions had many different ideas but they were all centered around the same goal of facilitating communication among developers and improving the many distressed communities within the United States.

Words of advice for future interns (housing, transportation, etc.)?
Try and find housing near a metro.

Words of thanks to your internship funding donors:
Thank you so much for giving me the opportunity to partake in this internship! I loved every minute of this internship and learned more in one summer than I thought I ever could. Thank you again for letting me experience the city of DC and learning about the field that I am passionate about.