

Summer Internship Report 2017

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Hometown: Nashville, Tennessee



**Firma Landscape Architecture
Nashville, Tennessee**

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

Firma is a relatively new landscape architecture firm that was established by Sewanee alum Scott Dismukes in Nashville about two years ago. Firma was a one man team until this summer of 2017 when Scott hired Sarah Newton full time and myself as an intern. Since its start, Firma's clients have mainly been residential with a few commercial projects here and there. My primary responsibilities this summer were organizing and creating design files, as well as conducting extensive project research. My research ranged from stormwater drainage remedies to museums' permanent collections, helping me to learn that every detail counts with a design project.

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?

At the beginning of my internship my primary responsibilities were completing any administrative tasks around the office, creating and organizing files, and helping with any current projects. As my eight weeks progressed, I moved to do more research related tasks. While still handling any random tasks, I completed extensive research for current and future projects, with my primary focus being on local and regional museums. In addition to seeing design projects first hand, I learned a lot about how to pull, analyze, and present data of all sorts.

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?

For one particular project, my colleagues were having trouble figuring out the systematic design for a pocket park, a small, urban park between buildings. The issue was deciding where to place a small

stage and private area of the park. During my time at Sewanee I took primarily geology classes and spent a great deal of time outside and standing on overlooks. Using my observational skills and love for a good view, I was able to form a design in which the stage could be seen from all angles of the park, and place a private area that would provide a separated feel from the rest of the park.

In what way were your teamwork skills strengthened?

I worked with two permanent colleagues at Firma and while it was a small team, it was a new experience for me to work with the same people on multiple different projects every day. I learned a lot about how to manage my personal work time with other people on a day-to-day basis. I also learned what it takes to keep up with a more experienced team and that it is never a bad time to ask questions!

How did your internship affect your career plans?

Working with a landscape architect was my first taste of making my childhood dream a reality. Since I was younger I had always wanted to be an architect. However, I fell in love with geology at Sewanee and landscape architecture was the cross between both worlds. After my internship, I definitely want to stay in the architecture business, and will always be amazed how closely related design and nature are.

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?

My internship was in an office of primarily Sewanee alumni. While this was very familiar for me, I had never been in an environment populated only by adults. I learned a great deal about the transition from college to the “real world” and so much about business in general. I loved being surrounded by people wiser than me and could not have asked for a more fulfilling internship.

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

Ask questions and use Facebook!! Never hesitate to ask those older than you and always ask your parents for help!

Words of thanks to your internship funding donors:

I will forever be grateful for the opportunity you have provided me with! I learned more in eight weeks about my future career than I have ever before. I am very excited about what is to come and hope to one day be a sustainable residential architect designing homes in Sewanee and all over the country.