

Paige Williams

Internship Report, Summer 2015

I interned at the World Affairs Council of Atlanta (Atlanta, GA). The organization's main goal is to provide a forum for discussing international topics and to bring in foreign diplomats, business leaders, and academics to speak on relevant subjects. My duties included social media, promoting programs and membership, creating labels and nametags, writing emails and invitations, interviewing foreign diplomats, and formatting complicated documents. During my time, WACA put on programs focusing on Cuba, Health in Latin America, Globalization in Atlanta, and the Latin American Left; they also led two trips to Havana. I was able to help organize, promote, and attend most of these programs.

I had many responsibilities during my time at WACA. My title was "Social Media Intern," so I managed Facebook and Twitter posts (often using HootSuite to schedule them ahead of time), like "In the News", "Trivia Tuesday", "Where in the World Wednesday", and "Throwback Thursday," along with promoting registration for upcoming programs. During my time, Facebook likes increased from 674 to 720, and Twitter followers increased from 537 to 585 (as of 7/15/15). I live-tweeted our flagship program, the Global Health Summit, which garnered 9,303 impressions from 30 tweets. I also was the direct contact for website design; I contacted the website manager when we needed to make changes or add pages and images. Among other things, I created a new page documenting the press coverage from WAC's June trip to Cuba (<http://wacatl.robinson.gsu.edu/programs/travel/mission-to-cuba-press-coverage/>).

I interviewed Paul Gleeson, the Consul General of Ireland, who returns to Dublin at the end of July; the article I wrote will be on the website (wacatl.robinson.gsu.edu). This was a great experience as I honed my interpersonal and journalistic skills; interviewing was a skill I had not used since high school, when I wrote for my school's paper. I also wrote synopses of various topics and compiled lists of relevant non-profits and potential speakers to sponsor or attend upcoming programs. For example, I researched the Pacific Alliance and wrote a paragraph on it for a letter the Vice-President of Programming was writing and created a chart of government spending on foreign aid for another presentation.

I had two high points from this experience. One was being able to get to know my boss Charles Shapiro, who was a great role model for me to see how to conduct myself in the workplace and not be afraid to voice my opinions. Another high point was getting to interview Consul General Gleeson, which was challenging and nerve-wracking but ultimately very rewarding and interesting. One low point at WACA was that some days I did not have much to do, but I spent my time reading *The Economist* and BBC News, so I was still able to immerse myself into international studies. I think the greatest lesson learned from this experience was how to speak up and develop strong interpersonal skills, and I will definitely bring this back to Sewanee.

This experience mostly reminded me of the passions I had in high school, mainly of speaking other languages and interest in the State Department. Whether I actually join the Foreign Service or not, it was great to have experience with people who had been in the department. I look forward to reigniting my Spanish skills and advancing my new foray into the German language.

The World Affairs Council has definitely helped me think about my future career. It renewed my interest in the Foreign Service and diplomacy, which I had focused on in high school. At one of our Members Forums, I met a woman whose career path was similar to what I'm interested in; we were able to meet for lunch and discuss the State Department and working in a consulting firm. This was great because I got to investigate exactly what I've wanted to do, and now have the ability to evaluate whether or not I'd like to do it. She gave me great advice in regards in international work; she passed the Foreign Service exam but decided to enter the Civil Service instead, and worked in various Latin American embassies. That was a choice I'd never thought of and I'm really grateful I was able to meet her.

This opportunity also reignited my love for language- I placed out of Spanish, so I haven't taken any classes at Sewanee, but I was able to speak it again at WACA (my boss and a co-worker are fluent). I may not take a Spanish class at Sewanee but I definitely want to advance my skills more (I already read El Pais and BBC Mundo in my free time). It also spurred my desire to learn a third language, German, during my upcoming semester in Vienna. All this knowledge will certainly help me pursue a career in international politics, law, or government work.