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Supreme Court of Florida Internship

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A New Experience

This past summer, I had the privilege of interning with the Supreme Court of Florida with the help of Sewanee alum, Pam Anderson. The endless learning experiences and friendships I have gained through the process have had a major impact on my future already. I worked with some of the most intelligent people I have ever met, and they introduced me to the “technology world” outside of college. From the first day, I learned something new every day. I gained a substantial amount of knowledge that will help me throughout the rest of my life.

Entering into the Supreme Court of Florida was a startling moment for me. Recognizing that I was going to be working with critical files and information for the state of Florida made me a little nervous. After passing the security check, I was greeted by one of my new co-workers, James. He took me down to meet the rest of the group; I quickly realized that they were a very close-knit group and solved problems together rather than alone. They welcomed me as if we were long lost friends reuniting to work on a project. I learned something from each and every person that I worked with, even the security guards and police officers. Everyone was willing to share their knowledge in order for me to have an eye-opening experience.

One of the first tasks for me was to differentiate between the Office of the State Courts Administrator (OSCA) and the Supreme Court (SC). These two groups have their own group of IT specialists. OSCA, which is the group that I worked with, is “the administrative arm of the Florida Supreme Court, and the office helps to ensure that the Florida Court System runs smoothly, particularly where administrative and funding issues are concerned.” The Supreme Court is composed of seven justices. The name of the IT specialist group I was a part of is

Information Systems Services (ISS). We helped all of the people in OSCA whenever they had any trouble with their technology from phones to printers to laptops. ISS workers also dealt with servers, networking, and programming, which was fairly new to me.

Another task of mine was to get familiar with all of the acronyms used by the group. As I know from being a Computer Science major, acronyms are used whenever and wherever possible when talking about technology. The first one I familiarized myself with is Uninterrupted Power Supply (UPS) which can be compared to a generator for a building when the power is out. It keeps a computer up and running when the power is down. Another acronym that is important is RAID, which stands for Redundant Array of Independent Disks. This storage technology combines multiple disk drive components into a unit in order for redundancy of information or backup. There are many different versions of a RAID, and they each vary in how many drives can go bad before there is a major problem. KVM, which stands for keyboard, video and mouse, gives access to the servers inside the server room. It allows authorized people to see what is happening within each server.

One project that was happening as I entered into the internship was the email exchange. Basically, they were attempting to upgrade everyone's email from a 2007 system to a 2013 system, which may sound easy, but I learned is a very complicated task. No one person could complete this task alone, not even the Microsoft trained technician. Everyone pitched in and the task was done within a week. If any part of the process went bad, the server would have problems which in turn caused the users to have problems with accessing and storing their information. That is why a test user was created and the problems were worked out from there. Seeing everyone in the group work together despite each of their individual tasks that they had to accomplish made me realize that teamwork is not just meant for sports. If you have a group of

people working on the same problem then the task will be completed in some orderly fashion.

The most exciting learning experience for me was creating and setting up a domain. First of all, a domain is a group of computers and devices on a network. We did all of this inside of Hyper-V manager which is a virtual machine. A virtual machine is just a virtual computer inside of a physical computer. While in the process of creating the domain, a domain controller had to be created in order to handle the security authentication requests such as logging in. Also, a Dynamic Host Configuration Protocol (DHCP) had to be set up in order to provide key Internet Protocol (IP) connectivity information. One computer had to be set up as the Domain Controller and another one had to be set up as the DHCP. In all, we had four computers on the network just for testing purposes and not actual use. Once the domain was created, we created Organizational Units (OU) consisting of users, disabled users, administrators, and computers. How many privileges a person has depends on their OU. For example, administrators usually have the most privileges or permissions over the access of their staff or users.

Working in the Supreme Court of Florida this summer has had a big influence on what I want to do with my career in the future. Not only do I want to be able to work with technology security, but I want to be able to make sure people are safe from any major problems that they do not know about. I want to be able to help people with their technology in any way that I may be of service to them by listening to their issues and performing services to ensure a high level of response. Working with the Supreme Court has given me an ample amount of knowledge that can further make me a better team player and computer scientist. I am very grateful for the opportunity that Sewanee and the Supreme Court of Florida have given me.