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Internship Funding Paper

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### ICONICTV SUMMER 2013

This summer I had the amazing opportunity to work at a start up called IconicTV. Iconic TV is “a new kind of digital entertainment company...that is dedicated to building the best multi network channels on the across the web.” IconicTV was founded in 2012 by Larry Aidem, the former manager of the Sundance Channel, and Michael Hirschorn, the former head of programming at VH1, combining two of the best talents in the entertainment industry. Instead of creating original content for basic cable, IconicTV creates “premium channels for the YouTube platform.” IconicTV’s channels Jay Z Life and Times, myISH, 123UnosDosTres, The Hillywood Show and POTATO have over half a billion views and over 1.6 million subscribers.

When I arrived for my first day at IconicTV in May, I was extremely nervous and unsure what to expect. On top of all the pressure, I discovered I would be the only intern until the other twenty interns arrived two weeks later in mid-June. However, after about an hour of being in the office I found myself very comfortable. Many of the reasons I became so drawn to working at a startup such as IconicTV are the very same reasons I became drawn to attending Sewanee. Its small and friendly environment gave me the attention and experience needed to excel towards my best potential. While larger corporations are great, I find that startups allow for real experience that goes a long way in your career. At smaller companies you don’t feel like just another “intern” but rather

you see the difference you make to the company and how appreciative they are of your work. I was not just making copies or running errands but my responsibilities were truly beneficial to the company. After a few days of becoming completely settled into the company and I began understanding what I wanted to do with the rest of my life following my time on the mountain.

Over the course of the summer, I found myself doing fun things such as discovering potential talent across the web and meeting artists from across the country. On a daily basis, my tasks included managing social media accounts, researching for the myISH channel series ISHList, Popoholics, and MyISH Presents, attending daily creative meetings for the IconicTV channels, and developing the IconicTV brand. From helping the channels gain more subscribers to having an entire webisode based on my ideas, the results of my work went farther than I expected. Every other week or so, I would find myself meeting artists ranging from YouTube celebs to national known artists like The Mowgli's, Mariana's Trench, Jay Sean and even French Montana. One of the most interesting projects of the summer was called the Pitch Challenge. Through out the summer, the interns were separated into four groups for a pitch challenge at the end of the summer. For this pitch challenge we were partnered up with a brand to create, develop, market and sell the series to a new channel on IconicTV called Lives featuring Meredith Viera. We worked on this challenge over the course of the summer and developed something really great that will go into production in the fall of 2013. I cannot say what it is because of legal issues but I am very excited to see the outcome. Our pitch team received positive reviews from the IconicTV family and the challenge was a great team and leadership building experience.

What I learned most about my time at IconicTV this summer is the importance of experience. This is the first time in my life that I have ever navigated myself towards working in the entertainment industry. I have always known but I have wanted to do media since working in social media in the summer of 2012 but I didn't know I wanted to focus on film and television. While I know now that I want to be in the entertainment industry, I still need a lot of experience if I want to be successful. I understand that that may mean having another internship after I graduate for a few months. But by working at a small company like IconicTV, I found myself enriched in hands on experience. By the end of the summer I felt less like an intern and more like a day-to-day employee. I believe that spending time at smaller yet established company gives you valuable experience that you will not find anywhere else. I hope one day I can find myself at high up position somewhere like NBC, ABC or Viacom but I know that takes connections and experience that you slowly must build up over time. I am look forward to starting the job process for next year and hopefully living in New York following graduation. I plan on staying connect to my boss and other employees at IconicTV because I would be grateful to obtain a job there next summer. I also suggest anyone interested in getting into the future of the television industry to intern for them also. I would be happy to set up a connection if anyone is interested. I really had an amazing summer that I truly felt is the first step in starting my career.

- Benjamin W. Baldwin