

This summer I interned for 10 weeks with The Angerholzer Team, a fundraising firm in Washington, DC which performed PAC fundraising work for incumbent Congressional Democrats. The Team, consisting of five staff under the leadership of Lindsay Angerholzer, worked to manage the fundraising of ten sitting Congressmen and Congresswomen as well a major medical trade association. The organization planned and executed fundraising events and meetings for its clients, researched and developed new donors, and worked directly the members to develop a solid fundraising effort. While the two-year election cycle used by the House of Representatives means that campaigning never truly stops, many of The Angerholzer Team's clients represent what might be considered "battleground" districts, which is to say that the districts do not traditionally poll strongly red or blue, and are highly competitive for both Republican and Democratic candidates. As these seats are pursued on both the right and the left, it is essential for incumbents in those districts to maintain strong campaign efforts, making the work of The Angerholzer Team invaluable to its clients.

My role as an intern carried with it a myriad of responsibilities, largely under the umbrella of facilitating successful fundraising events. I was responsible for helping to maintain our donor database, ensuring our contact information was up-to-date as to best serve our clients. Additionally, my duties included communicating event information to potential donors, staffing various events, preparing client briefing memos, event follow-up, donor research, and general troubleshooting as to best execute successful events and client services. While the majority of my work was for the Assistant Vice President (a Sewanee alum), I strove to make myself available to the entire office, and thus, was able to assist almost all of the staff with various

events and data-entry work. It is also important to note that approximately halfway through my internship, The Angerholzer Team merged with Political Development Group, a separate firm which performed similar fundraising work for eleven other House Democrats, in order to form Angerholzer Broz Consulting. While this doubled the size of our office, and that of the client load, my workload remained primarily consistent, and I continued to work primarily with the staff with whom I had worked previously.

The Angerholzer Team was a fantastic opportunity to familiarize myself with the fast-paced work environment, a distinct from my previous internship experience. We were responsible for organizing multiple events a week, sometimes even multiple events a day, and properly coordinating each event, in addition to communicating event information to potential donors, was highly demanding and required an intense attention detail (something which I have admittedly traditionally struggled with). However, it was also, to be blunt, a lot of fun. The staff and other interns were all a joy to work with, and as the summer progressed, projects which had initially seemed daunting were conquered, perhaps not with ease, but conquered. My fellow interns and I also developed a strong system of communication to make sure we all pulled our weight, and that any outstanding projects were addressed immediately. While this fast-paced environment meant we were almost never bored, it also provided a very concrete sense of accomplishment, as we were able to see where our work went, and what it accomplished. Any donor research we performed went immediately into our database for our next event, and any event which we prepared came to fruition later that week. This sense of tangible results helped drive me to the next project, and made the entire experience a fantastic one.

When I interviewed the CDO of the Points of Light Foundation for my funding request, he said two things which, in hindsight, I think help to frame my experience at The Angerholzer Team. The first was that “fundraising is about telling a story.” While the fast-paced environment and incredible team ethic of our office made the experience one of learning and growth, the reality is that I am a pretty big Democrat, and that had I not believed in the story we were trying to tell, that of candidates fighting for policies I agree with and believe might make America a better place, mine would have been a very different experience. One of the myriad duties in our office was to monitor the activities on the House Floor, and thus, much C-Span was watched in our office. A lot of what occurred was, I admit, not particularly interesting to watch, but every once in a while, a truly meaningful and important piece of legislation made it to the floor, and it was exciting to think that the work our office did helped to keep democracy moving.

The second thing he said was (I’m paraphrasing here), “It helps to believe in what you’re working for, and barring that, it helps to like the people you work with.” I was fortunate enough in my experience to both truly believe in the cause and to truly enjoy those in our office, all of whom were passionate and committed, but also really funny, really engaging people with whom it was a joy to work with. My internship was very much a lesson in enthusiasm, of learning to ask for more work because there was more work to be done, and of trying to love every second of it, even when was really exhausting. I’m not sure if I will go into development after I graduate, but I know that as a Politics major, the communication and planning skills which my experience at the A-Team helped to build will be invaluable, and that hard work is in many ways a reward in itself. This opportunity allowed me to couple my passions, my strengths, and my work, and as I prepare to enter the workforce, I hope to find a career that allows me to do just that.