

Southern Community Bank Internship Report

Southern Community Bank is a small community bank based in Tullahoma with branches in Tullahoma, Sewanee, Murfreesboro, and Huntsville. Southern Community Bank has about \$150 million in assets, and has rapidly grown over the past few years. The CEO, Bill Yoder offered the paid internship to Sewanee students for the first time this year. His primary interest was to offer me an opportunity to learn as much as possible about the operations in community banking.

I spent the first two weeks in loan operations, which did entail a good deal of filing and organizing data. This however was necessary in order to gain an understanding of the loans and of the customers in which we dealt with. The tasks over the next several weeks ranged widely, depending on what I was interested in learning and on various tasks and projects that the bank needed. One of the focuses was credit analysts, which I thoroughly enjoyed learning. It allowed me to apply the accounting and finance classes I took at Sewanee. For the final week of the internship, I acted as a customer service representative. This involved taking phone calls, assisting customers with account inquiries, and transferring or directing customers to other employees at the bank. I was also trained to open various accounts for customers, but did not perform this task live for a customer.

Mr. Bill Yoder was very involved throughout the entire internship. On a weekly basis he would ask, "Well Will, what would you like to learn or do next." I frequently attended meetings with him, met in his office to discuss various aspects of banking, and I even attended a bank party during my internship. The atmosphere of the bank was very relaxed and friendly.

In many ways, spending time at a community bank offers a more valuable experience than a large national bank. You gain a broad overview of the entire workings of the bank rather than spending the majority of your time doing a very specific task--which will likely be the case at a large bank. However, because the bank is very small, it was not uncommon to find myself without a task for a large portion of a day. In these events, I was allowed to do independent research on banking or any other topic that would further my education and exposure to banking. My overall experience at Southern Community Bank was very positive. I learned a great deal more about community banking and about myself than I had before the internship.