

I interned as a research assistant at Sewanee: the University of the South. My research was investigating the price gap existing between the United States and Canada. I meet weekly with my research advisor Dr. Marc St-Pierre. The first half of my internship was gathering data and reading other papers on the US-Canada price gap. Most of my time was spent looking for raw price data from both Canada and the United States of identical goods with only difference being location of sale. The second half of my internship was spent analyzing and interpreting the data, and writing up the results. Here my focus was on writing up knowledge gathered from other papers on the US-Canada price gap while adding the knowledge gained from analyzing my data. With further work, the paper I started writing this internship should be publishable, as no other paper has analyzed the US-Canada raw price data as it varied over a decade

Though my internship was about writing one research paper, I had to do multiple small projects to create the larger paper. First I had to gather data, lots of data. Mostly I was looking for raw price data, but I also had to find data on variables that may affect prices or the price gap. I went through many different websites and corporations trying to get raw price data going back to 2001. I could easily find current price data for almost any good, but getting data that goes back over six months is significantly harder. I could not find clothing data, and so I had to broaden my search. Eventually I found data that would work in my time frame was from the United States and Canada census. These goods were mostly agricultural and from markets that are almost perfectly competitive. I did not

expect to find any price gap in adjusted prices for these goods, but I did. This led Dr. St-Pierre and I to reframe and reexamine the price gap. While gathering data, I also read papers written about the US-Canada price gap, or about the formulas I would use when analyzing the data in the economics program Stata. Dr. St-Pierre explained the math included in all the papers we read so I would understand what the regressions would do to the data and why it mattered.

After I finished the data gathering stage, Dr. St-Pierre taught me how to use Stata to analyze the data. Stata allowed me to quickly and accurately use an extrapolation off a basic linear regression equation to examine the price gap between the countries. Stata allowed me to input variable data that would affect the price gap, such as taxation, gas prices, inflation rates and other such data. The regression equation would take account these variables and allow me to analyze exactly what affected the price gap and how large the gap actually is. I did several regressions, each with different variables. When I met with Dr. St-Pierre we would discuss the data and sometimes he would request that I find data on another variable say, product source, and input that into the next regression. Each meeting we would also go over my latest draft of the paper, and I would edit and add more to it for the next meeting. By the end of the internship I had a complete rough draft, which with some more work can be publishable.

This internship was my first taste of real research. I had done research papers for class before, but this paper is much more in-depth. I had to hold

myself accountable for my work. It was very self-driven. My meetings with Dr. St-Pierre helped me to direct and focus my work, but the bulk of work would be done on my own. With my research I had to be flexible with my focus. Originally I was looking for clothing goods prices, but I only found data on agricultural goods, so I shifted my focus. The paper will be just as good and will examine the same principles, but I had to be able to adjust. What I learned from this internship is that research papers will not follow always the direct path you lay out. You will have to be able to adjust your paper, and shift your focus to make the paper come together. I had to do research not just into the raw data, but into what might affect the data or the countries price gap. I did not realize going in, how much data I would need just to understand what affects the price gap. The amount of work required just to get to data analyzing is more than the analytical and writing portion of the research combined.

I am a dual Math and Economics major. I want to be an economist. Prior to this internship I did not know if I would enjoy doing long in-depth research papers. For certain jobs research is critical for an economist. After this internship I know not only can I handle doing long in-depth research, but that I enjoy doing it. When planning my economist career ahead, I am going to include the possibility of doing research. This internship has only confirmed my goal of being an economist.