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Biltmore Church Internship

This summer, I was given the opportunity to be an intern at Biltmore Church. I was positioned with the college ministry team, at the Arden campus located in Asheville, N.C. One of the benefits of being an intern at the Arden campus is being able to live in their intern house, the best part about that is that it's free. Other than being able to stay there for free it was also convenient, it was only 2 minutes away from the church! I lived in the house with two other guys, one of them was also a college intern and the other was interning in the missions department. The reason that matters? Since we were all interning and all doing different things and some the same we were able to learn from each other. Through sharing what worked and didn't work for us, or by actually teaching each other how the budget forms work or how to post on the church social media feed. I chose to intern at the church because I want to pursue a career in full-time ministry. I chose to do the college age ministry because I want to do evangelism and travel around speaking to different college age kids, primarily athletics on different college campuses.

Throughout this internship I learned how to effectively make a social media strategy and a posting schedule. I had the responsibility of being in charge of the biltmore college social media account. This was actually a big task considering COVID-19 hit us hard and as a big church we haven't been able to have but a couple gatherings. We decided that we would develop a plan to post on our social media page every day except for saturday. On sunday morning we

would post on our story to remind our followers to tune into our online service. On Monday we would simply repost a piece of Sunday's church service. On Tuesday we would post on our story a reminder to come to our college age connect group on Wednesday nights. On Wednesday we posted on our feed a bible verse with words of encouragement. Thursday we posted a question box for how we could be praying for people. Friday we posted on our feed good summer reading books, or summer reading plans. The reason we posted every day but Saturday was we wanted our followers to stay connected with us and to know we were doing everything we could to engage with them and still minister to them.

The other major accomplishment that stood out to me through my internship experience was learning how to create lesson plans to teach a bible study. I have led bible studies through Biltmore at WCU for the last two years. But this was a small group that consisted of both male and females whereas my groups at Western were always all men. I was able to work directly with the college pastor who is also a communication major and have him teach me what he learned in both college and seminary school. After spending time with him learning how to effectively build a lesson plan, I was then able to take over the connect group and build my own plan on the book of Romans. Then I was able to teach that plan as he sat in and watched. This was my favorite part of my internship and the area where I learned the most useful information in regards to the career path that I want to pursue after college. This also led to me being able to take notes on the Sunday sermons and then facilitate a Zoom meeting with other college age students and discuss those notes.

The courses that helped me the most with those accomplishments and with the internship as a whole were, writing for communication media, desktop publishing, Intro to public relations,

and small group and team communication. I found these courses as a whole equipped me the most for knowing how to work well with others, knowing how to write in a public relations style (short and to the point) which is the same way you do a lesson plan or a sermon outline, knowing how to edit pictures and make graphics, and just knowing how to be a respectful group member. I think these courses gave me confidence in going into the internship, but I never knew how much I would actually use the things I had learned. I know that sounds silly, but in almost everything the church had me doing I was prepared for thanks to those courses.

I will say that the only area in which I was not prepared for was planning events, or planning in general. I know that planning is something you typically learn to do through the college experience and meeting deadlines and balancing work loads. This was a different form of planning tho. This was more of a planning that involved more than just myself. This was planning events that involved multiple different people and having to try and plan around their schedules while also serving the majority. I would propose that Western Carolina's communication department add a course that is structured in planning events. A lot of work in communication or in public relations has to do with planning events and then knowing those plans will fall through and having to plan again and again. At the church we would plan an event and then plan a plan B, while also knowing both of those could fall through so we would be working on an entire other plan as well.

I know that having an entire course dedicated to planning would be difficult. At the same time I do believe it would be extremely beneficial and it is something you cannot always learn on your own. I learned a lot from the other church employees who had stated they just had to learn how to plan as they went along their journey and that they wished they could have known how

much they would have to do so. This is why I believe it is necessary that the communication department better equip the students to be prepared to plan not just for themselves but events and for other people.

In short conclusion, my internship experience was as good as it possibly could have been considering it took place during a worldwide pandemic. I will also add that it reaffirmed my call to ministry, while also reaffirming the major that I chose to go along with that calling. Overall I was prepared for this experience thanks to my communication courses and professors, and of course the hard work I have put in as well.