

Megan Wheat  
Dr. Ellie Caston  
MST 5V60  
03 August 2012

### Master's Internship: Final Thoughts and Reflection

This internship with the Promotions and Events Department was an amazing experience. I really enjoyed being a part of the daily operations at the Mayborn Museum Complex at Baylor University in Waco, Texas. The staff members here made me truly feel like a part of the team. Their friendly nature and all-around agreeable disposition made an internship at the Mayborn enjoyable and worthwhile. Even though I was inexperienced at working with volunteers and events, every member of the Promotions and Events Department treated me well as I began to acclimate to the job duties. After I established my base knowledge, the staff members of every Department respected my decisions as an intern when handling various situations. Their confidence in my choices made me feel like a fellow staff member and assured me of a job well done. Most of the time, I was given freedom by my supervisors to work as I chose. Because of this independence, I did not feel that I was being monitored every minute of the day, making me feel more comfortable and at ease with my surroundings. I believe this respect, confidence, and independence contributed to a positive learning environment, which, in turn, enhanced my on-the-job training.

A particular strength of this internship is the likeness it gives the intern to an actual job. I worked for ten consecutive weeks at forty hours per week, which are regular work hours to be expected from any full-time professional job. These hours, in addition to the pay, at a professional institution add to the feeling of trust expected at any real job in the working world. As such, I believe that I was also given more work and responsibility throughout the summer as part of my intern duties. Many internships do not last as long as the one I completed at the

Mayborn, falling short by either consecutive work weeks or hours worked per week. My total time commitment definitely attributed to the feeling of being a museum professional at the Mayborn. I experienced the extremes of the work week with every passing moment, whether it was extreme business or extreme idleness. While there were inactive and quiet moments during my internship, the interludes provided a look into the actualities of working. Experiencing these lulls will prepare me for the probability of idleness in my future, making me fully capable of finding ways to fill my time until scheduled activities pick up again. On the other hand, the extremely busy times during the internship taught me how to cope with juggling multiple tasks and decisions at once. Experiencing extremes in the workplace certainly affirms the similarity of this internship position to a professional job in the museum world.

While having down time can be as good an experience as having many activities and tasks, too much inactivity can become a detriment to the internship. As my volunteer duties slowed down, it was nice to learn more about social media, memberships, and events by meeting with the various staff members responsible for these areas. However, I wish I could have had a larger role in each of these areas. As annoying as it might have been, I would have loved to shadow the coordinators for events and memberships as they performed daily tasks surrounding their respective areas in the museum. Not to say that I did not learn anything from the time spent with them, but I feel that I could have learned more if given the opportunity to experience these areas for an entire day or more. Even though my internship intentionally centered on managing and organizing volunteers, I always strive for more knowledge and information and would have loved to delve more in each of these areas. I realize that a museum professional in a large museum will have specific tasks and duties assigned as part of his or her more specialized job, an aspect I thought I would enjoy as I search for a job. However, now I am recognizing that

perhaps a job in a smaller institution may be more suited for my taste. As I gained experience in the various departments at the Mayborn (I also held assistantships in the Education and Collections Departments during my time at Baylor), I realized that variety makes continually swapping duties entertaining and fun. I might like working in a small museum for the very diversity of tasks that a job there can offer. However, in this economy, any job will suit me just fine.

For whichever size museum I end up working, I am very grateful for this internship because it has shown me my strengths and weaknesses in the work place. I gained an awareness of my behavior from the internship, which can be applied to any future work I do in museums. Hopefully, this increased awareness will improve my ability to serve as a team member at any museum. I always like to be self-aware, especially regarding my work ethic. Throughout this summer, I became especially aware of my occasional tardiness in the morning. This, I feel, has always been a problem of mine. Luckily, with practice and the continuity of the internship, I was able to break my bad habit. I also felt that I had trouble communicating with the teen volunteers. In the beginning, I struggled to establish a relationship as their supervisor and to command their attention. However, close to the end of the summer, I definitely found my inner authoritative voice and demanded attention during a particularly taxing morning. This internship gave me the opportunity to further practice being more confident and commanding when supervising others, which I greatly appreciate. During my evaluation, my host supervisors here at the Mayborn commented on my quietness as an area that needed improvement, saying that I have great ideas but just need to find confidence in presenting those ideas to others. This comment resonated with me because I have known that I need to work on this area of my professional development.

Despite my weaknesses, I do have some strengths of which I am aware. I found that these strengths were very useful while completing my internship. For example, I have always been able to easily converse with adults and seniors, making learning from my adult supervisors and managing the older volunteers comfortable for me. Also, through formerly held positions, I have cultivated the ability to handle situations as they arise without panic or uncertainty. My strengths of flexibility and easy conversation were certainly put to the test during this internship. Now, I believe I will be able to successfully apply these skills in any future job I might obtain. This internship has done well to reveal the areas that I need to address as well as the strengths that I can bring to the table during a future position at any museum.

Overall, this internship provides a tremendous opportunity for anyone seeking essential job experience before entering the world of professional museum work. I became more aware of myself and of my abilities while learning all about volunteers and events by completing this internship. For me, this internship provided an opportunity to learn and grow in the actual work force, a beneficial opportunity to anyone seeking a position in a museum after graduation.