

From August 2007 to December 2007, I worked as an intern at the State Attorney's Office in the MC Blanchard Building located in downtown Pensacola. During that time, I was required to use and develop skills that will make me successful in my future endeavors. Punctuality was quite possibly the most important skill used during my internship. I am now better able to understand why most professors expected students to arrive on time to class. The productivity of an entire department is negatively impacted each time someone fails to arrive as expected. Fortunately, over the last four years, I have learned to take punctuality seriously. Listening carefully proved to be another valuable skill as I learned my way around the office. The ability to listen helped me to learn duties, expectations and even names. Organizational skills were both utilized and developed for this internship. In many cases, multiple tasks needed to be completed over an extended period of time. The ability to effectively organize and prioritize was crucial in order to get tasks completed on time.

This internship was incredibly beneficial to me as I prepared for future employment in the Criminal Justice field. My current plans are to attend police academy in January of 2008 and, upon completion, attain a position in law enforcement. My time at the State Attorney's Office allowed me to see how the legal side of the justice system works. As an intern, I was permitted to attend many different types of court cases. In doing so, I was able to witness first-hand how police officers conduct themselves in a courtroom. I learned about the important relationship that police officers have with the prosecutors and saw for myself what was expected. During my internship, I was also given the opportunity to lead my department in the implementation of an important

project. During this project, I conducted a department meeting on new procedures and served as a resource for some of the paid employees. By leading the project, I was given a chance to practice a workplace situation that will certainly be beneficial to me in the future.

I truly believe that I was not the only one to benefit from this internship opportunity. The State Attorney's Office benefited from my participation as well. The department that I was assigned to is in charge of filing paperwork, as well as other miscellaneous tasks around the office. I was able to assist the department with some of the work that was less detailed. In doing so, my coworkers were able to focus on more time sensitive material. Initially, I was concerned that some of the work that I did was not of the greatest importance. As I look back, however, I realize that my performance was meaningful to the office as a whole.

This internship experience has helped clarify my career expectations. I learned the value of teamwork and how to develop workplace relationships. The people I have met will be great mentors for me as I become a professional law enforcement officer. I have had a chance to speak with many of the Assistant State Attorneys about what they need from officers to successfully prosecute a crime and what conduct is expected at trial. This experience has allowed me to see the functions of law after the investigative work is completed.

The Criminal Justice Program at the University of West Florida has done an excellent job of preparing me for this opportunity. During my time at the office, I was frequently complimented on my work ethic and attitude. Specifically, the expectations of my professors closely resemble those of prospective employers.

For those students looking for an internship opportunity, the State Attorney's Office is a welcoming and high-paced environment. There are, however, a few things that future interns might want to know. First is the importance of personal appearance in a business setting. Personal appearance was not something I considered very often during class time at UWF. When working in a professional environment, however, appropriate attire is imperative to help others to see you as both knowledgeable and competent. The ability to self-motivate is also important. Few employees will watch you as you work. This is especially true here. The office is quite busy and it is expected that you will complete your responsibilities, even if no one is watching. It is also important to be flexible. Ask for additional duties or offer to assist others as needed. This approach will not help the office, but also increase your knowledge. Finally, have fun. Everyone in the office is friendly and makes you feel welcome. I was treated as a true professional.