

During the last 15 months I participated in an internship with the Drug Enforcement Administration's Pensacola resident office. During the course of this internship I was exposed to federal drug law enforcement as well as local and state drug law enforcement. The office was made up of four Special Agents, one Agent in Charge, two office staff, and two data analysts. I gained a lot of experience during this internship placement, and I was exposed to many situations.

This internship gave me a significant amount of knowledge and skills. One of the most important things that I learned was how the structure of the agency worked. While the Pensacola office is rather small, the operations throughout the rest of the country and the entire world are very large. The DEA has numerous offices overseas that work with the local law enforcement to interdict and control the drug trade on a world wide level.

Some offices are very large with over forty agents. They are able to conduct and carry out their own operations much easier than the office here in Pensacola. Due to its smaller size, the Pensacola office conducts most of its investigations on tips and cases that have started locally that are being picked up federally. When they need to execute search warrants or do large scale operations, they rely on the local and county agencies, as well as other DEA offices to help them.

The skills that I have obtained as a result of this internship will help me in the pursuit of my own law enforcement career goals. Skills such as conducting business with not only the DEA, but other federal agencies such as the FBI, ATF, and the U.S. Attorney's Office will help me in the future when I work with those agencies. During this semester I was able to work closely with other agencies, and I learned how closely the agencies work together.

I was able to sit in on several hearings and trials in federal court, which I had never been able to attend before. Being able to see how state and federal courts work, and how they conduct proceedings, was vastly important since I will most likely be working with these entities greatly in the future.

My goals going into this internship were to gain in depth knowledge on how the organization worked, as well as gain understanding about conducting federal narcotics investigations. My assignments during this internship allowed me to accomplish those goals. Being able to work with the same forms, computer databases, and investigative tools that the Special Agents use was very helpful. It was also helpful being able to work with and follow the agents during an investigation from start to finish.

This internship allowed me to see a part of the DEA that I was previously unaware of when I started. The demand reduction programs that I was able to take part of are a very effective way of stopping the amount of drug users in America. From participating in Red Ribbon Week events to being able to visit schools with agents to work closely with children and juveniles, I was able to see first hand how the DEA educates and helps reduce the number of drug users in America.

My performance during this internship was very involved. I took full advantage of the situation by attending everything that I could. I was able to be a part of the Gulf Coast Red Ribbon Council and play a role in the planning of the Red Ribbon Week events. I was also able to take place in a wiretap takedown that resulted in over fifteen search warrants and around thirty five arrests. I was able to work throughout the day and help investigators and agents with paper work, and booking the subjects identified in the investigation. The only problem that occurred during the semester was my inability to

participate in certain aspects of the job due to my civilian status. Duties that only sworn law enforcement personnel could complete I was obviously not able to do.

The Pensacola office was not able to gain a great amount of help in an investigative manner as a result of my internship placement, but they were able to gain some help around the office. Every day tasks that I was able to do, allowed the agents to focus more on their investigations. The reasoning behind the remedial amount of work I was able to complete was my civilian status. This placement might one day provide future employment opportunities through the contacts and experience that I have gained. The DEA is currently under a hiring freeze, but I hope to eventually become employed with this organization.

My internship with the DEA was a very rewarding experience. My opinion of the organization is very high now that I have had a chance to work closely within it. I observed how the agency works and functions on a worldwide level to reduce and stop the use, sale, and manufacture of illicit drugs. My career orientation after this internship is stronger than ever. This internship has allowed me to further realize that I want to one day become a narcotics investigator whether it is with a local, state, or federal agency. I feel like my interpersonal skills have improved as a result of this internship through dealing and working with not only the individuals from this agency but those with other agencies.

The UWF criminal justice program prepared me for this internship better than I expected. Not only did the classes prepare me with the fundamentals of the criminal justice system and basic investigate processes, but I was also able to participate in another narcotics internship with the Escambia County Sheriffs Office. The internship

with Escambia County allowed me to meet and become familiar with the Pensacola DEA office, as well as come in to my second internship with an understanding of narcotics investigations. This allowed me to retain a lot more information and get more out of my DEA internship.

As a result of the UWF criminal justice program, I gained the classroom knowledge of the criminal justice system, and also achieved on the job experience with both local and federal narcotics investigations, all before I graduated. The only way I could have been better prepared would be if I had been able to take a few more electives. I wish I had had the opportunity to take the electives that are being offered now, such as narco-terrorism.

Advice that I would give to future interns would be to make the most of the time that they have. This is true even more so with any internship with a federal agency. If a student completed all of the paperwork and extensive background checks, then they need to take full advantage of the situation. As some have already learned this is a prestigious and difficult internship to acquire. Students should take that into consideration and make the most of it.