

Final Internship Reflections

General Reflection

Applying Knowledge from Class: The knowledge I learned in class played a pivotal role in my ability to perform during my summer internship with Save the Children Jordan (SCJ). The range of classes I took for my two majors in Journalism and International & Global Studies prepared me well for many of the situations I encountered in Jordan. The most helpful Journalism classes I took were COM110 Media Writing, COM220 Creating Multimedia Content and COM315 Multimedia News Production. These classes honed my journalistic abilities and taught me to approach stories from different angles, skills that I used every day I was on the field. The most helpful International & Global Studies classes I took were POL336 Middle East Politics, POL358 Media and War and COR359 Media and the Middle East. These classes helped me contextualize the region and the country I was working in, which allowed me to perform better as a reporter because I had a deeper understanding of the topics I was covering. I truly believe that without the knowledge I gained from these classes I would have been less effective within the Advocacy, Media and Communications (AMC) Department of SCJ.

Missing Skills: Before taking part in this internship, I wish I had a stronger base in the Arabic language. This would have allowed me to be more effective with SCJ because I would have been able to work on more stories and reports on my own, instead of needing a translator or stringer. There was also some tasks I could not do because of my elementary understanding of Arabic, and even though my Arabic improved tremendously over the summer I still have a long way to go. My experience of being less effective because of this missing skill is why I will be continuing my Arabic learning this fall. Hopefully what I learn in Arabic class at Elon will make me more effective during my next posting in the Middle East.

Skills Learned: I learned new skills and improved on existing skills during my internship with SCJ. Firstly, I greatly improved my personal communication skills because a lot of the interviews I conducted for SCJ were with individuals that had been through horrific circumstances. Working with these people really improved my ability to be an empathic journalist, a skill I will use during the rest of my career in the communications field. Secondly, my general reporting skills also improved because of the amount of practice I had over the summer. I was constantly either working on my own stories, helping other reporters or generating new ideas, which led to a lot of time writing, editing and taking photos. Lastly, I learned so much about strategic communication. As an NGO, the news that SCJ covers is very planned out and focuses on the work that the organization is doing on the ground. Working with SCJ allowed me to understand how a major NGO structures their news coverage.

Major Challenges: My largest struggle this summer was confronting my superiors with problems I saw within the structure of SCJ's coverage plan. I consider myself to be very confrontation and straightforward. But I struggled to confront my superiors about these issues because as an intern I found it difficult to talk to professionals about the problems I saw in their system. I wasn't sure if it was my place to do so and I didn't want to come off as rude. I created presentations with possible new ideas and sent polite emails when something would go wrong and I had suggestions on how to fix it, but unfortunately nothing changed. I wish I had been more prepared to handle this type of situation as it would have allowed me to make more of a difference within the organization.

Valuable Lessons: The most valuable lesson I learned with SCJ this summer was that there was a way to combine my passions in both the field of journalism and humanitarian work. Knowing this field of work exists and is thriving was a really exciting discovery for me. This lesson will be important for me to know during my future as a communications professional because I always need to keep my mind open to different opportunities. Now that I know this field exists, I'll be more aware of potential job opportunities and a possible career in advocacy journalism.

Expectation Enhancement for Advocacy Journalism: My internship with SCJ enhanced my expectations of advocacy journalism. I really enjoyed the work I was doing over the summer and saw its importance first hand. Before working with SCJ, I had no experience in this specific field of journalism and was unsure about a potential career path in advocacy journalism. But after this internship, I am now considering the possibility of going into advocacy journalism in the future. Major humanitarian organizations such as the UN and the Human Rights Watch do great journalism and it would be an honor to contribute to their work. The main goal I set for this internship was to be constantly busy, whether it be with major tasks or menial ones. Every day I was there, I wanted to be a constant help to the organization. I achieved this goal and after proving to the team I was willing to excel when doing the grunt work such as archiving, filing, organizing and cleaning, they began to give me bigger projects to work on. That is how I was later assigned to cover major events such as World Refugee Day and Six Years of Zaatari.

Leadership Skills: SCJ's leadership was very "lead from the front" orientated. Many of the leaders within my department were the first to get to the office and the last to leave. They were always eager to work in the field and that attitude really had a huge impact on the mood of our department. I really enjoyed this type of leadership and I hope to emulate it. The only leadership that I would improve is the leadership within the CEO's office. There was very little trust between the CEO's office and departments within SCJ, which hindered a lot of the organization's work. An example that is painfully branded into my mind, is when the AMC department was trying to get an article published by one of Jordan's local news outlets, but our CEO refused to sign off on the story unless she read it first. So, we sent it to her and she took three days to read the story, which made us miss our deadline and therefore not have the article published. My department has a competent leader and I wish our CEO had trusted that leader to do their job correctly.

Permanent Position and Internship Recommendation: While I loved working with SCJ, I would not consider taking a permanent position with the organization. I am still incredibly determined to pursue a career in investigative journalism and that just isn't a possibility within the organization at the moment. Even though the news coverage SCJ provides is pivotal and truly matters, I believe I can make more of a difference in the world by being an investigative journalist. However, I would absolutely recommend this internship to other students at Elon because I believe it would really be an eye opening experience for anyone. Unfortunately, due to the violence in the region and the negative news coverage, there are a lot of misconceptions about the Middle East and Jordan. I really believe an internship with SCJ would allow Elon students to look past what they might see on the news and help them form their own opinions on the Middle East.

Diversity Reflection

Interning with SCJ was my first experience working in Jordan and in the Middle East. It was also my first time working with a majority Muslim organization. Through this exposure I learned a lot about Jordanian and Middle Eastern culture, but also about Islam. I arrived in Jordan half-way through Ramadan and experienced the many different practices that occur during this month-long religious event. Throughout my two months in Jordan I also experienced the five daily prayers Muslims participate in. This is the most exposure I have ever had to the Muslim culture and I loved every moment of it. I've learned I have a lot in common with many people in my department, despite our obvious differences. Our ability to work together despite our differences also proved that a common cause is more powerful than any difference. We were all working to make a difference within the country and help those affected by the Syrian Refugee Crisis. That mattered more than any religion or nationality.

Diversity plays a huge role in all work environments, but especially within ours. At SCJ, I was the only Christian, Filipino and Intern at the organization. This allowed me to bring a different perspective to SCJ and the work that we do. A distinct example of how diversity had a direct affect on SCJ's work, was when we were all working together to create SCJ's new website. With two religions, three nationalities, two genders, three generations and several socioeconomic classes present during the discussion, we were really able to think dynamically about the design of our website. This diversity really allowed us to design a new website that will be user friendly and reach our audiences around the world. I only wish that we could have had more diversity, as I know it would have made our website even better. Diversity is needed in every work place, but especially in the world of international aid. It is also an incredible asset in SCJ's communication team because we are trying to appeal to audiences from all over the world that are coming from very different backgrounds. If SCJ continues to diversify its AMC department and its entire staff we will be able to produce better content that is relatable to people from all over the world.