

This past summer, I embarked on an eight-week journey to Dublin, Ireland to not only work and study, but to learn a little more about myself as well. Going into my summer program, which consisted of an eight-week internship as well as an internship seminar class, I did not know anyone else in my program, and was unsure of what the trip would be like. Soon after I got there, though, I met a great group of friends, and slowly got used to living and working in a European country.

My internship was with a small start-up company that produced a specific type of industrial metal coating process based out of a college innovation lab in North Dublin. I had no background of industrial engineering going in and given that I was doing marketing for the company, I had to learn a lot on the fly. I almost felt as if I was doing a consulting job, as I interviewed several of the technological officers of the company to figure out what aspects of their products made it stand out above their competitors, then proceed to market the products. One major project I worked on was the re-design of the company website. Despite no major background in web design, I figured out how best to make mock-ups of web pages for the new company website. The relaxed nature of the business culture in Ireland forced me to figure out how to do things by myself, and I learned a lot about self-sufficiency in the process.

Perhaps my biggest project over the summer was the complete revamping of the company's social media strategy. The start-up had almost no viable social media presence and faced an impending pivot towards more direct commercial sales. I devised a 5-page social media guide, with potential posts and overall strategy tips, as well as a PowerPoint to present my advice to superiors at the company. I ended up posting almost a post per day towards the end of my internship, which greatly increased web traffic for the company.

The hardest part about every work day was the hour-long commute each way on the Dublin public bus system, but the commute and other aspects of living in a different country played a vital role in furthering my experiential education. While I can learn a lot from a workspace and a classroom, the challenge of navigating my commute to work on public transportation and figuring out how to buy other necessities like groceries taught me so much about myself. They are struggles that I had never experienced, things that I was forced to adapt to and overcome. I ended up loving Dublin and became incredibly familiar with my daily bus route. I would never have experienced similar challenges if I had simply stayed in the United States over the summer.

Another aspect of our work-study program was the classes we had to take in accordance with our internship. Not only did my class meet every Wednesday night after work to learn about Irish business, culture and history, but we also went on excursions every Friday to see some of Dublin's best sights. We toured Croke Park, the home of the Gaelic Games, where I also got to see both a Gaelic football and a hurling match during my time in Ireland. We also did a scavenger hunt throughout Dublin, learned how to play the Gaelic sports, and took a tour of an authentic Irish whiskey distillery. Some of my best memories during my trip were travelling within Ireland, as I went to the Curragh racecourse one weekend with some friends to watch the Irish Derby and bet on a few horses. I also played several rounds of golf throughout Ireland with my dad, who visited me after my program had ended. One thing I will never forget about Ireland was its natural beauty, as no matter where I went I was greeted by some of the most magnificent views I've ever seen. While I learned a lot in the workplace and in the classroom, I learned the most about Ireland by traveling throughout the country.

One aspect of living in Ireland that our group took full advantage of was the ability to cheaply travel throughout Europe. During several weekends throughout our trip, our small group traveled to London, Amsterdam, and Scotland. While I discussed my other trips in my last email, I was able to travel to Edinburgh, Scotland. We went to Saturday at the Open Championship golf tournament at Carnoustie, a dream experience for an avid golf fan like me. My friend and I followed Tiger Woods, Phil Mickelson and more of the world's top golfers. We also walked around the center of Edinburgh and I was amazed by the beauty of the city's landscape and architecture. Traveling throughout Europe this summer let me see some of the more incredible sights on the continent and played a key role in making my summer unforgettable.

I will never forget this summer for the rest of my life. I made new friends, saw new sights, and learned so much about Irish culture and business. The Alpha Sigma Foundation played a huge part in making this summer happen, and I cannot thank the Foundation enough for their support.