

California Post-Secondary Education Commission Summer 2008

This past summer I had the opportunity to intern at the California Postsecondary Education Commission (CPEC). At first I was a little skeptical of what I was going to be doing because I honestly had never heard about this commission. I mean I think it should be called the Higher Education Commission. Yet even though I had these beginning qualms, as the summer is coming to an end I can think of a million things I loved about my internship and only a few things I did not like about the internship.

Overall, I would definitely recommend this internship to people who are really independent and self-sufficient. My boss was out of the office a lot going on short and long trips so if you are someone who needs constant guidance and direction then this is not the place for you. Also, I would only recommend this internship to someone who likes to do research because there is a lot of it! The majority of the office is made up of researchers and there are just a few policy people. As a whole, if you are interested in topics like college affordability, disabled and LGBT friendly campuses, improving teacher quality, or working on the transition between college graduation and the workforce, then this is the place for you.

My internship was a very unique experience. As I walked into the office on my first day my direct supervisor sat me down and asked me what I was interested in and what I was looking for. So, I told her I was really interested in improving K-12 teacher quality but that I would be willing to do anything. So, she explained to me that I should look into teacher professional development in K-12 teachers. So, I said ok and I began my research. From there on, I researched, I went to local colleges and observed teacher professional development, and I was able to put together a survey on "what" professional development looks like in California that the Commission distributed to over 500 different Superintendents and Curriculum Advisors in California public K-12 schools. I loved how I felt like I had a voice and that I wasn't treated as the office intern. I got to do my own research, with my own questions, in my own style (obviously with help from the resident CPEC computer tech guy). I also appreciated being able to use what I was doing at work in combination with my policy analysis paper for class. The only thing I did not like about my internship was that it felt a little inconsistent. Some days it was work, work, work, while other days it was slower and I did not feel like I had much to do. As well, it was hard in the beginning to feel accomplished because all I was doing was researching and had little to gauge how well I was doing. Overall though, my experience has been a 15 out of 10. The Commission went above and beyond all of my expectations!