

The Dewey Square Group Summer 2008

My internship with The Dewey Square Group was phenomenal! I had a wonderful experience in this office and learned some indescribable things. Being given the opportunity to work on The California Governor and First Ladies Conference on Women was amazing, and I am thrilled to be able to say I was a part of this year's event.

I immediately felt comfortable in my internship placement and was happy with my decision to intern here. Everyone in the office is very friendly and helpful, so I was never afraid to ask questions about how to do something or if I was doing it right. I had some trouble with one co-worker in the beginning, but we got along just fine at the end. She just started working there full-time before I came on, but I got to attend The Women's Conference and she didn't. That created a little tension and awkwardness for awhile, but we got through it. You realize when you sit next to someone or work with people who's personality may clash with yours, that you just have to deal with it and learn how to work with them. That was a good lesson right in the beginning of my internship. Now we are friends and I'm sure we'll keep in touch after I leave the office.

I was taken in as an intern specifically to help with The Women's Conference which is an enormous undertaking! Dewey Square is in charge of all the 75+ speakers who attend to the event. They had been working all year to shape the program and lock down such amazing speakers. My duties when I came in, about a month prior to the Conference, were basically to provide back up support for Claire, who is the Deputy Program Director of The Conference. She would have me call speakers' assistants to check in with them, gather RSVP's for certain receptions at The Conference, and put together various documents that were used during the event. At the actual Conference in Long Beach, I also backed Claire up and basically ran around doing whatever needed to be done. I ended up escorting two speakers around the huge Long Beach Convention Center to make sure they didn't get lost and got to their sessions on time. The Conference itself was a great success but somewhat stressful behind the scenes because there were a lot of last minute changes and computer problems that we had to deal with. I learned during the Conference that you have to stay calm during crunch time and just figure out how to get things done when things may not exactly be going your way. We problem-solved very efficiently and got everything done before the 14,000 attendees started streaming in.

Occasionally, in the month prior to the Conference I would be given other tasks such as research for the other principals of Dewey Square who work on green energy and for the "No on 8" and "No on 4" campaigns. Getting other work was great to broaden my horizons, but it was

sometimes stressful in the office to have multiple tasks at the same time. After the Conference I did a lot of the wrap up work such as thank-you notes and follow up phone calls. I really improved my phone skills and computer skills throughout this process. I had to make a ton of Excel documents and spreadsheets. I was not that familiar with Excel, but luckily my co-workers were there to give me tips along the way which I know I will use in the future! I also sent out quite a few Fed Ex packages, I became an expert at making labels on the internet, printing them out and making sure all the correct information was on the labels so they would get places on time!

Overall I think this experience at Dewey Square made me even more excited about a career in public service. The most important thing I am taking from this internship is the fact that I think I would much rather work in the public sector. While DSG works on a lot of campaigns and current political issues, they are a private firm meaning that they work for specific clients who pay them a lot of money. While many of their clients do worthwhile things, I would rather work directly for the people and see that I am helping people who need help. I gained a lot of knowledge about how the private sector or politics works which I think will be useful in the future. I just know that I want to work more with “the people” and be on the front lines so to speak, rather than in an office doing everything and anything to keep my clients happy.

Like I said earlier in this write up, most of the things I learned from this internship and program are indescribable. Just the work experience and working with other people teaches you so many lessons. I learned a lot from watching my supervisor, Claire, and the other principals at DSG. Watching how they lead meetings, how they ask people to do things, and how they juggle their workloads gives me a lot of ideas about how I want to be in the professional world. Observing others and the way they do things is so important! I also learned a lot of things I didn't know how to do on the computer, especially with Microsoft Excel. I know I will take these lessons into whatever else I do with my life.

I would highly recommend this amazing internship experience to other UCCS interns. I was given great things to do, I was always busy and I got to work on one of the coolest events in the country, The Women's Conference. It would be great to work at Dewey Square any quarter throughout the year because they are always working on exciting things and you could see the earlier planning stages for The Women's Conference.