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Storyteller: They Speak, I Listen

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Abstract

Since February of 2022, I have been an intern working at the Warhawk Air Museum in Nampa, Idaho. Throughout the museum, there are books and binders everywhere that feature individual stories from veterans of World War I, World War II, the Cold War, the Korean War, the Vietnam War and even stories from Iraq and Afghanistan veterans. As an intern, I was able to make these binders and put them together. I was given letters, photos, documents, journals and more and it feels like these veterans are talking to me and telling me their stories. I would not have known about this internship if it had not been for reaching out to the Internship Coordinator at Boise State University. I wanted to inspire more students to intern and volunteer at the Warhawk Air Museum so that the knowledge, the stories and the history can be shared for generations to come. I wrote a book about my time as an intern and about some of the projects I have worked on so that future interns can learn about what they could be doing and why the Warhawk is a great place to learn and grow.

Keywords: Internship, History, Warhawk Air Museum, Stories, Projects, Learn, Grow

Introduction to My Capstone Project

As a college student, I have learned the importance of internships and how beneficial they can be. Professor Bob Reinhardt is the Internship Coordinator for the history department at Boise State University and I reached out to him to ask about how to get into an internship that has to do with hands-on work with museum artifacts and displays. I was having a difficult time finding any on my own, so I asked for help. Internships are a great way for college students to take what they already know from what they have learned in the classroom and apply it to the workforce they are striving for. When asked what he thinks students can gain by participating in an internship, Professor Reinhardt answered, “Professional networking; learning how to put their skills to work in a practical situation; learning how to talk about and explain the practical uses and applications of their skills; and, of course, additional lines for their resumé.”

The Warhawk Air Museum was one of the places listed on the history department’s website for available internships and it became my first choice. Fast forward to February of 2022 when I had my first day working as an intern for the curator, Lou Bauman at the Warhawk Air Museum. I was assigned to read love letters from a Korean War veteran named Chuck Richter to his wife, Mary and to create a binder that told their story. I held the original letters that have traveled around the world in my hands and it was such an incredible experience. This was my first project and I will always remember it and the feeling of absolute accomplishment when I saw what I made on display.

Now it is April of 2023 and I have been offered a job at the Warhawk Air Museum. I have made more binders and have been able to participate in the behind-the-scenes work at the museum. For this project, I knew I wanted to do something for and about the museum. The museum has become a home to me and what a great learning experience working there has been.

This is why I chose the Professional Action approach because what I was doing at the museum was the first step into getting my career started.

I wanted to do a project that has to do with my two passions which are history and writing. I knew I wanted to do something that had to do with the museum, but how could I incorporate my passion for writing? Then I got it! I decided to write a book about my experience as an intern at the Warhawk Air Museum that explains what I did as an intern and what I was able to experience. I wanted to write about what I did, what I saw and how it made me feel so that future interns would want to come to the museum and work. My project is called Storyteller.

Elements Coming Together

There were a few different perspectives that came together for my project. I wanted to focus on the benefits of internships for college students through the perspectives of not just my own, but of the curator of the Warhawk Air Museum (Lou Bauman), the administration (Heather Moore) and executive director of the museum (Sue Paul), and from the internship coordinator for the history department at Boise State University (Professor Bob Reinhardt). I asked each one what they thought about the benefits of internships and here is what they had to say:

Question: Do you think internships in general are beneficial for college students? Why or why not?

Lou Bauman's answer: "Internships are beneficial because they give access to information and activities that are not readily available to the general public. Interns develop skills in research, design, layout, and the presentation of materials."

Heather Moore's and Sue Paul's answer: "Generally, yes, as it provides students an opportunity to get a feel for potential careers they are considering while they are still in school. It

also gives them an opportunity to interact and be part of a professional work environment, which may or may not be a new experience.”

Professor Reinhardt’s answer referred to what he wrote about what students can gain by participating in an internship as mentioned on page three.

This project also made me think about my own emotional intelligence and the emotional intelligence of my audience. This project has made me think about the work I have done at the museum and how important non-profit organizations are for the community. I would like for others to realize how important these organizations are and that there are ways we as a community can help them. This project can help people learn about what veterans have gone through, how they can get help to heal and what it took for them to get help. I want this project to teach the importance of community.

This project did require a lot of creative thinking. I took what I have learned in the classroom and in my internship and applied to *Storyteller*. A skill I have learned while working as an intern is how to decide what to include and what to take out while still being able to tell a veteran’s story. I had to do this for my project because I was concerned that if I wrote too much the reader would lose interest, but if I wrote too little then I as the writer might have failed to deliver my experience as an intern. Instead of writing about all of the projects I have done, I decided to write about the first three as these were the projects that I feel have impacted me the most. I would use sensory language to write about what I saw, heard and felt while being at the museum and would write reflectively about the projects I worked on and the emotions that I experienced.

The project also required me to be innovative. At first, I wanted to create and write an actual book. However, after giving this idea further thought I realized that this could be

expensive and I would risk the book not being printed and done in time by the due date. I then thought about talking to the museum staff about adding a pdf. link on the museum's website. I thought about perhaps creating a page on the website about the internship opportunities available and then include my experience on the website making access to my story easier and cheaper. This idea was met with uncertainty about if it could be done. Then after thinking about it more, I realized that there is a local copy place in my hometown and I could go there and ask about printing and binding my project to make it a sturdy, bright, and durable book.

Results

My book is made and ready to be presented to the museum! The way I measure the impact of my project was by asking Heather Moore to provide feedback. I sent her a list of questions regarding my project and asked her to rate sections on a scale of one to ten with one being the lowest and ten being the highest. I asked Heather to rate grammar, writing style, layout, design, whether or not *Storyteller* explains the opportunities available to interns and if students would feel inspired and if she thought my project explained the mission of the museum. The museum's mission statement is to "educate visitors about the cost of freedom and honor those who paid its price." Heather made comments about grammar and punctuation mistakes that needed to be corrected and I am grateful for that.

Conclusion

I enjoyed working on this project because it had to do with my two passions and when you are passionate about what you are doing, it will never feel like work. This internship at the Warhawk Air Museum has opened my eyes to another passion that I did not know I had. I learned that I enjoy learning about aircraft. I learned so much about myself and would love to inspire other students to come to the Warhawk Air Museum to learn, work and volunteer. I am

always nervous when submitting written work, but was pleasantly surprised to see how high Heather rated my project. I wish I could have been able to perhaps create a hardcover book, but I was concerned about the cost to make it and if it would be done in time. I am happy with the overall results and I am excited to share my work.

References

Bauman, Lou - Curator of the Warhawk Air Museum April 5th, 2023

Moore, Heather - Administration, Education and Communications of the Warhawk Air Museum,
April 11th, 2023

Paul, Sue - Executive Director, Co-founder of the Warhawk Air Museum, April 11th, 2023

Reinhardt, Bob - Associate Professor and Internship Coordinator, Department of History
Director, Working History Center at Boise State University, April 17th, 2023

Appendix

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