The Happiest Place On Earth

During the spring semester of my junior year, I was fortunate enough to intern for Walt Disney Parks and Resorts, U.S. as a Business Systems Consultant in the Labor Relations department. The Walt Disney Company is known for its rich history, deep tradition, and unbelievable entertainment. As a member of the hospitality industry, the company is notorious for demanding excellence of its Cast Members in order to deliver superior customer service and create lifelong memories for guests. It is truly a company that creates magic.

The Labor Relations department is an integrated HR resource that advises, supports, and advocates on behalf of the company in all issues regarding its many collective bargaining agreements and other labor related issues. As an engineering student unfamiliar with this department, I had the opportunity to learn about a completely new segment of business. Over the course of my internship, I helped the department utilize technology to effectively manage work, provided recommendations for new process solutions, and developed quantitative analysis to influence structural change and departmental decisions.

I spent the first part of my internship engaging in the grievance process to gain an in-depth understanding of Labor Relations. This valuable period of learning the department’s work was crucial to my later projects. After becoming engaged in and understanding the business practices, I had the opportunity to manage my own consulting project pertaining to the internal process of managing grievances. First, I interviewed every member of the team involved with this process to engage in conversation pertaining to the current process and the problems he or she observed. I synthesized the current process in my PowerPoint and then identified possible opportunities for improvement. Taking into account all of the interviews and my own
observations, I proposed a new process to the Grievance Team. This presentation facilitated conversation around a new process, which was then implemented.

Another major component of my internship was the development of quantitative analysis, which was used to impact structural changes and departmental decisions. Creating these reports helped strengthen my analytical and communication skills.

Most of my other projects involved effectively utilizing technology to enhance efficiency and communication among different departments within the company. I created an internal webpage to help the Labor Relations department help educate and convey important information to Disneyland Resort leaders. Also, after gaining a comprehensive understanding of the current case management system, I conducted a comparison analysis to facilitate the decision making process of a new internal processing system.

Through my projects, I was able to gain exposure to a consultant’s work. I had the opportunity to influence departmental and processes changes by taking advantage of my Operations Research background.

Additionally, I gained insights into my own personal goals for my career. Through opportunities to meet executives in other segments of the company, I gained exposure to departments and lines of work that could potentially be a great fit for my unique skill set and interests in the future.

The Disney Professional Internship Program provides the option of company sponsored housing. The program assigns four to six Professional Interns to share a furnished apartment. Payment for housing is automatically removed from the intern’s weekly paycheck. However, interns can choose to find their own housing. Additionally, a car is required for the internship.
Living and working at Walt Disney World is truly a unique and exciting experience. Disney interns are given access to the four theme parks and discounts on Disney food and merchandise. Between the theme parks and restaurants, there is never a shortage of fun weekend activities. Outside of Disney, Orlando offers premium outlets, shopping malls, and beaches.

Through my internship with Walt Disney Parks and Resorts, I gained valuable and applicable consulting experience and exposure to ways in which my analytical background could be applied to a role in one of the largest entertainment companies in the world. This was an amazing opportunity both professionally and personally. I had amazing mentors and was surrounded by people who were genuinely invested in helping me learn. However, it is very clear that this internship is completely about initiative. I sought out opportunities to apply my skill set and actively asked for projects tailored to my background. I feel that I was able to make a valuable and unique contribution to the department. It meant a lot to know that the work I was doing would benefit the team. My advice is to make the most of this experience both in and out of the office. This internship was truly a unique and special opportunity.