An International Experience in Montana
Edited by Emily Pritchard

UM Communication Studies major Emily Etchart spent a semester interning with UM’s Office of International Programs: Study Abroad Office. Through this internship, Emily was able to explore her interests in public relations and learn more about the world around her. “It was an international journey that taught me a lot about myself and my future career goals.”

How was your internship with the Study Abroad Office? What kind of work did they have to do?

“My internship was exceptional! I was able to work on a few projects that suited my interests in eventually working in Public Relations. I have always liked hearing people’s stories and sharing them. I was able to express this desire through organizing personal interviews with former Study Abroad students about their experiences. These interviews were used to help with recruitment as well as marketing the services that Study Abroad offers. I also helped design the renovations for the Study Abroad website and gave suggestions on how to efficiently update the information. Another project that my fellow intern, Spencer and I have been working on is a voice-over instructional video for the Study Abroad website. My responsibilities were to create a script for the voice-over and then create a recording for the video. A few of my daily tasks included updating the social media accounts including Wordpress, Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook.”

How did you get connected with this opportunity?

“I will be studying abroad this fall in Karlsruhe, Germany through ISEP exchange and have had an interest in working with international relations. Since I had applied for Study Abroad I was in the office often chatting with Melissa, the Study Abroad Coordinator, and got to know her fairly well. I decided to apply for this internship to gain a little bit of experience in Public Relations.”
Where are you from originally? Did this internship impact the way you view the world?

“I am from a town in Northeastern Montana called Glasgow, which is a very rural, isolated area. The internship broadened my horizons, and helped me understand a new perspective on other cultures.”

What was the most rewarding part of this experience?

“I found it most rewarding to be able to share other people’s experiences and also getting to know some of the people we had interviewed. For example, we interviewed a former student who now works for TOMS, the shoe company in Amsterdam. I hope that our work as interns inspired others to Study Abroad and pursue their dreams.”

Do you have a favorite part of the internship?

“My favorite part was the interviews with students but also when University Relations interviewed me for the Family Weekend video. It was very exciting being interviewed by the camera and knowing that others will see it! I also enjoyed having the opportunity to creatively reconstruct the bulletin board outside of the office. It looks very professional and engaging, I hope that student’s like it!”

How has your participation in this internship impacted your life as a student and as a person in general?

“I feel more confident about my career path and believe that it has taught me important skills, such as prioritization and organization.”

You mentioned that you are considering a Journalism Minor, is that directly related to your internship experience?

“Yes, the Journalism minor was definitely inspired by working with the interviews. The interviews sparked an interest in wanting to know more about Journalism and interviewing others in general.”

Were there any challenges you had to overcome during the internship?

“There were a few technology issues, and time deadlines that made a few of my tasks difficult to accomplish. However, I learned how to figure out alternative ways to accomplish tasks and it wasn't always easy but I acquired skills to figure it out!”

Any issues balancing the internship with other responsibilities?

“The internship was during the summer so I did not have class work (except for the internship course requirements), however it was difficult balancing with a full-time job as a hotel front desk attendant.”
Would you recommend an opportunity like this to other students?

“I would highly recommend interning with the Study Abroad office, I was exposed to a lot of diversity and able to work on interests I had.”

Check-out some of Emily’s work for the Study Abroad Office at the following links:

http://www.umt.edu/international-programs/study-abroad/default.php
http://umstudyabroad.wordpress.com