Unexpected Opportunities
Edited by Emily Pritchard

Business Management Junior Ross Trout spent Spring semester interning with the University of Montana Adams Center as an Event Coordinator Intern. “My experience interning at the Adams Center has been life changing with endless amounts of opportunities to come in the future because of the incredible staff I have had the pleasure of working with during my time there!”

Tell us about the Adams Center.

“Since the 1950’s, the Adams Center, located on the Northeast corner of campus has been providing a variety of entertainment events to Montanans from concerts to plays to sporting events. The Adams Center was named after and dedicated to Harry F. Adams who was involved in serving the University of Montana for 44 years. In 1998 the Adams Center went through with one of their largest renovations ever, costing roughly $15 million dollars that went toward the addition of the East and West Auxiliary Gyms that now host a variety of events and allow extra practice space for UM Athletes prior to game days (information provided from Adams Center Administration). Today, the Adams Center is the largest indoor venue in Missoula.”

What were some of your tasks as an intern?

“Event management duties include staffing, managing employees on day of events, and managing/executing parking plans for large event. I am also learned and experienced in other operational duties including event setup/teardown, ushering/ADA ushering, ticket taking, event personal runner, and merchandising for numerous concerts and events.”

Why did you decide to take on this internship?

“I decided to take the internship at the Adams Center because it was something new that I was
completely unskilled and unfamiliar with. I have always been one that desires to learn and attain skills from all different industries. The more I learn about many industries, the more I have to talk about to friends, family, and strangers. I also loved the fact that the internship was offered on campus and I didn’t have to take an internship in the summer time because that is when I am busy with other summer jobs!”

How did you find out about this internship?

“It’s a very strange story! It all started out because of my interest in Professor Mike Morelli’s Event Management 401 course that I took earlier this school year during the Autumn 2015 semester. Being a business management major, a majority of the information in the course was brand new to me but I loved it! Basically, there was an Adams Center training meeting that I was required to attend for credit in Professor Mike Morelli’s Event Management 401 course early on in the semester to get familiarized with how operations work for a large events venue. I found myself intrigued with the presentation put on by the Director of the Adams Center, Brad Murphy, and wanted to put myself to a challenge so I went into the Adams Center the next day and got a job with them!”

“For a majority of the Autumn 2015 semester, I worked numerous events and loved that I had the privilege of calling it “work”. A close friend of mine, Alexa Poteshman was the intern during my first semester working with the Adams Center. Once the semester came to an end I approached Adrien Wingard, who is the Event Coordinator for the Adams Center and I asked her if she had an open position for an internship for the Spring 2016 semester and that was that! Now I’m nearly done with the internship and I couldn’t have been happier and more honored to work directly by Adrien Wingard’s side for the time I have!”

The Shrine Circus
Have there been any challenges while working for the Adams Center?

“As Adrien Wingard told me recently, “In events, things will ALWAYS not go as you expected them to go. Learn from your mistakes & as long as no one is hurt it’s a good day!” So the answer to this is absolutely, YES! There are always challenges when working with the tour for any event because we need to follow their rider and prepare specific items for every event that comes to the Adams Center. If there is an issue, we get to the bottom of it, resolve it, make sure all parties are happy, and get back to work! The craziest experience I’ve had was a few weeks ago during the Shrine Circus. There was a lady that had dropped her keys down a sewer in parking lot P, the large one in front of the Adams Center. She had her new RV keys and two of her other vehicles keys attached to it, all of which were the one and only copy of the keys she had for the vehicles. Anyway, the outdoor program was closed so there were no waders to get. I used to volunteer for the Watershed Education Network last year for a while and I called up Deb and she had gloves and waders for me to borrow, I hopped into the sewer, dug around and after about 15 minutes I found the lady’s keys! She was very pleased and it made me happy to personally help out a guest of the Adams Center!”

Ross fishing out the keys from the sewer.

What has been the most rewarding part of this experience?

“The most rewarding part of my experience interning for the Adams Center has been the new connections that I have made on campus with people of different cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds because of how large the events staff is at the Adams Center. I also was given an opportunity to intern for Jared Jones, Co-Owner/CEO of Ross Trout helping with the Shrine Circus event.”

Ross Trout helping with the Shrine Circus event.
Revolution MMA, LLC, for the first Revolution Cage Combat back in early February that was held at the Adams Center. The event was a success and I have just taken a full-paid position as the Event Coordinator for Revolution MMA, LLC, and will be in charge of marketing, staffing, and other duties for the next Cage Combat event coming to the Adams Center on September 9th, 2016. I never would have thought that a required training meeting from a class last semester would turn to all of these incredible opportunities right here on the UM campus!”

**What advice would you give other students considering opportunities like this?**

“Whenver students have an opportunity to get involved with an internship on or off campus, whether it is during the school year or over the summer, to accept the challenge and give it your utmost effort because you never know if the field of work you are involved in will lead to new challenging experiences later in life. My internship with the Adams Center has led me to two other internship opportunities that I have taken offers from even though I never imagined myself to end up enjoying and being so involved in the event industry before I took the internship at the Adams Center. Keep an open-minded thought process at all times to make the best of your college experience and to better prepare yourself for post-graduation life because things will get harder before they get easier! Set yourself apart from the rest of the crowd and do spectacular things with the short amount of time you have in college!”

**Has this experience reaffirmed your career goals or has it changed your mind in any way?**

“This experience has definitely made me think harder about the career I want to take up after graduation. I still firmly believe that I will end up in the sales industry of some sort or the real estate industry with my father in a few years down the road but if an opportunity worth taking comes up in the event industry, I may take that up for a few years to make important networking connections and further my experience in the event industry!”

**How has your participation in this AE experience impacted your life as a student and as a person in general?**

“Participating in an internship has made me gain an incredible amount of skills that will work to my advantage in the future no matter what job(s) I land. It has helped make the transition to adulthood much easier because of the large amount of responsibilities I was put in charge of over the semester and it has made school more pleasurable because the more work I have on my plate, the more determined I am to succeed!”
**One final question, why did you come to the UM from Minnesota?**

“I applied to The University of Montana, The University of Colorado Boulder, & The University of Minnesota when I was searching for colleges to attend during my senior year of high school in 2012. I was accepted to all three Universities but my main goal was to head out West for a life full of new experiences and mountains specifically. I went to Telluride, Colorado in 2010 with a great friend of mine to snowboard for a week and knew at that moment I had to take the risk of moving across the country for college. The University of Minnesota was my back up plan if I was not accepted to The University of Colorado Boulder or The University of Montana. Once I found out I was accepted to all three and had options I immediately looked into the tuition costs for Boulder and The University of Montana. I found that Boulder was nearly double the cost of Montana so it made my decision very simple and I ended up here in Missoula for the Fall 2012 semester to begin my journey as a freshman living in the dorms.”

**Anything else?**

“To freshman students that are beginning their journey at the University of Montana, get involved with as many different clubs/organizations on campus as you can fit into your schedule right away to make a well-balanced life style because if you have too much free time on your hands it’s extremely easy to fall behind in school and put assignments off until the last minute! You will never have a hard time finding fun activities to do in Missoula so don’t live college life with the fear of missing out because it’s impossible to miss out on everything in the busy-going community in Missoula!”