

Chris Sheldon

Westerly Sun

As I enter the final days of my summer internship at the Westerly Sun under the tutelage of my editor David Smith, I look back on it as one of the best experiences of my college life. The experience I have gained from working with Dave has been invaluable to me as I am learning to become a journalist. I have used skills I have learned at URI to help me and have learned countless others during my time at the newspaper.

I believe I have met all of the course goals outlined on the syllabus. I have created a cogent and coherent resume and cover letter to use for potential jobs in print journalism. The cover letter and resume that I sent to you for evaluation will be the same ones I send to my future employers as I search for a job. I'm sure I will be able to add things to it as the year progresses, but the basic outline and format for the resume are already there.

One great thing about my internship is that I have been able to compile about 40 clippings that I can show to my future employers. Dave allowed me to write many articles and also had me take the photos for many of the stories. I didn't expect to write this many articles, but it has been a pleasant surprise and will be very helpful to me as I search for a job after college.

I now have a better understanding of job-seeking skills. I know that there are various resources I can use to find a job including newspapers, the internet, or simply picking up the phone and speaking with an employer. I think the hardest thing is getting started and having the self-confidence to begin your job hunt. However, I was able to do so, by simply calling the Westerly Sun and asking if they were taking in any new interns. This was an incredible boost of confidence for myself, and will help me to do the same when I am looking for a job.

I have learned that it is important to be yourself and present yourself in a desirable way when you have a job interview. It is good to have something to show your employer, including clips which are very important and can help get you a job as a journalist. Editors like to know that the people they are hiring are good writers and show potential for growth. It is also another case, where having self-confidence can go a long way in landing you a job.

The one course goal I feel I may not have met is being able to discuss workplace issues, problems and solutions. I have read about these things, but have not really faced them in my workplace. I never really discussed professional misconduct, benefits, obligations or employee rights with Dave. I feel these are topics that will come up in future job opportunities, but not during an internship. I have a vague understanding of these topics, but will not have a true grasp of them until they happen to me personally.

I have been able to communicate effectively with professionals in my workplace, both in the office and during assignments. I have created great relationships with the people I have interviewed and the people I work with. Dave and I have a very good relationship

and I feel that as he began to trust me and learn more about me, it continued to grow. Good relationships with the people you work with are some of the best things to have as a journalist. Some people I met were more helpful than others, but I noticed that everybody you interview is pretty friendly and wants their voice heard in the newspaper.

I feel that I am better prepared to enter the workplace after graduation. I will have a degree and great deal of experience as a writer in a professional environment. I have even been able to parlay the internship into a job as a freelance reporter for Dave. It is going to be fun to actually get paid to write to stories and has instilled with me confidence, because it shows me that he believes in me as a journalist. Hopefully, I will be able to write for either Dave or Ray Lamont, editor of the Westerly Sun, as a full-time journalist after graduation. If not, at least I will have a lot of experience and will be able to work elsewhere.

I wish that I had known earlier that summer internship would be so helpful to me. I would have done an internship last summer as well. I would have been able to accumulate even more credits, and would have extra experience and clippings. However, this is the only thing I wish I had known. Otherwise, the internship has met and surpassed my expectations as far as the amount of work I did how positive the overall experience has been.

There are many connections between the courses I have taken and my internship experiences. Public Affairs Reporting (JOR 320) with Professor Corey has been especially helpful. In that class we wrote all different kinds of stories including feature stories with hard and soft leads. The majority of the articles I have written for Dave have been feature stories. I have used the same guidelines he gave us to help me write feature stories during my internship. It also taught me about interviewing people and required us to drive to many of the places where the stories were occurring. These are two things that I had to do for every assignment I had.

Editing for Publication (JOR 341) with Professor Cyr has also been helpful because it taught me valuable editing skills and helped me improve my grammar. This has been evident in my internship, because my stories usually do not require much editing or refinement. I was also required to sometimes edit other writers' stories and I occasionally found mistakes in their work. I was able to identify them thanks to the skills I learned in this class. Media Writing (JOR 220) with Professor Levin was another useful class I took. One of the other things I did during my internship was editing press releases, which I did frequently during the internship. Media Writing also gave me a broad understanding and introduction to the world of journalism.

It has been a great thrill to write and take pictures for the Westerly Pawcatuck Press, Mystic River Press, Charlestown Press and the Wood River Press. The staff is incredibly friendly and very helpful to me. It is the perfect place for a young writer to grow and develop his skills. I recommend interning there for any student who wishes to gain experience in the field of journalism. They are always looking to help out young writers and always take on new interns. They let you write many articles and take the pictures for

them as well. You do not have to fetch coffee for people or do loads of paper work; they treat you like you are a member of their staff. I highly suggest that the Westerly Sun should be at the top of anybody who wants to do an internship's list of possible places to work.

I am so glad that I decided to choose the Westerly Sun for my internship. Working there has solidified my love for print journalism and now I cannot see myself doing anything else with my life. I feel that I have become a more seasoned writer and a better journalist because of time I have spent there this summer. I have even been able to get a job a result of doing the internship, which was both unexpected and amazing. I thank you Dr. Luebke for making the experience so positive and for being so helpful to me this summer. The syllabus you have created is very fair and has helped me look at the internship more deeply. I look forward to seeing you on campus during my final year at URI.