

Internship Description

Internship: The U.S. Commercial Service at the U.S. Mission to the European Union (CSEU) Summer Internship

Internship Dates: May 13th 2017 – August 5th 2017

The Employing Organization

The U.S. Mission to the European Union can be found in the heart of Brussels next door to the U.S. Embassy to Belgium. It is the direct link between the U.S. Government and the European Union. The Mission currently employs representatives from the Department of State, Commerce, Agriculture, Homeland Security, Justice and Treasury; the Agency for International Development and the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative. The U.S. Commercial Service at the U.S. Mission to the European Union (CSEU) is part of the U.S. Department of Commerce. CSEU's mission is to promote U.S. business interests in the European Union through advocacy, information dissemination, and cooperation with other Commercial Service posts throughout Europe and the world. CSEU provides trade counseling to U.S. firms in areas such as legal and regulatory issues, documentation and product requirements, trade problems, and market intelligence. American companies benefit from U.S. government engagement with the European Union to protect U.S. business interests through commercial diplomacy.

The Position

The internship program at the CSEU in Brussels brings together interns from both graduate and undergraduate university programs from throughout the United States and Belgium. Working hours in the CSEU office are from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m., 5 days a week. Interns work 40 hours per week for a minimum of three months. The positions are voluntary and unpaid. Internships with CSEU are conducted in English and while European language skills are desirable, it is not a requirement.

I will provide value to the CSEU office as a summer intern through my academic familiarity with the European Union and my skills in policy research. Through my communications internship with the Notre Dame Environmental Change Initiative, I am already familiar with writing for an external stakeholder audience. I am enthusiastic to learn about how the CSEU office functions and the opportunities for overseas careers with the U.S. government.

Primary Duties

CSEU works with interns to identify projects in policy areas and sectors that are both of interest to the intern and relevant to CSEU stakeholders. Interns will assist in the preparation of short, topical

reports covering policy developments in the European Union that are of interest to U.S. exporters. Research on incoming business inquiries from American firms about EU legislation and regulations is another intern work function.

Interns are integrated into the daily work of the American and Foreign Service National staff through their attendance of office and Mission staff meetings and external conferences. Interns also assist with the planning and organization associated with high-level visitors and other events taking place during the internship.

Rationale for the Experience

While studying abroad in London last fall, I took a political science class on the European Union. I thought it would be a timely class to take as the United Kingdom had just voted to leave the Union. I was required to share EU news highlights in class which established a habit of being up-to-date on EU affairs. The class included a trip to Brussels to tour the EU headquarters and talk with EU employees. I produced two thoroughly researched papers and presentations; one on the people represented by the European Commission and the other regarding the drivers of reform in the Common Agricultural Policy.

I was surprised to see how much I enjoyed the way the class truly blended considerations of the EU's business focused backbone and of the cross-cultural challenges in a pan-European union. As a Management Consulting major with minors in Sustainability and Anthropology I found that studying the European Union blended together a lot of my academic interests.

While considering plans for my post-junior year summer and my eventual goals post-graduation, I've really tried to focus in on what I value most in a future workplace. Early on in my Notre Dame career I assumed that because I was a consulting major I would gravitate towards the traditional consulting field. But I have learned that instead of focusing on an industry, I find it more meaningful to try and align my own values with the values of a given work environment. I value working in a globally-minded setting more than anything. As someone who grew up bridging cultural barriers on a daily basis as an expat, helping others work between cultures is probably the most fulfilling thing I could do. Working for the Department of Commerce at an international office would allow me to use the skill set I am cultivating at Notre Dame to satisfy my desire to practice personal and professional diplomacy in a future career.

Academic and Professional Goals

Through the coursework I completed last semester I now have a strong background knowledge about the European Union to begin an internship at CSEU. Academically, I hope to take that knowledge a step further by moving away from the textbooks to see how everyday decision-making happens in the

European Union. I am also looking to further my knowledge of specific policy areas that I am interested in such as international trade with the EU, agricultural policy within the Union, and EU foreign affairs. Professionally, I am excited by the opportunity to test whether I would like to pursue being a Foreign Service officer. I am also looking forward to learning about other government departments represented at the U.S. Mission to the EU.

Period of Service Plan

I would be interning at CSEU from the 15th of May to the 4th of August. I intend to fly between Chicago and Brussels at the beginning and end of the internship assignment. During the internship, I will be able to live with my family and I will use my own kitchenette for meals. The CSEU office usually buys lunch in the area around the Mission building. French is the spoken language in Brussels, and it is one of the working languages of the European Union. I lived in France in high school and studied French during that time. Through French AP exam scores I have academic credit for Intermediate French I and II on my Notre Dame transcript. French language skills are not a requirement for a CSEU internship. The CSEU office works in English, but I would like to practice my French to enrich my experiences outside of the office both in a day-to-day context and in work interactions with European Union employees.