

INTERNSHIP SPOTLIGHT

Alexus Fields



Graduation Year: 2019

Semester & Year of Internship: Summer 2018

Major: Criminal Justice

Minor: Psychology

Hobbies: Reading, Video Gaming, Fishing, Traveling

Campus Activities: Criminal Justice Club Vice President

Future Plans/Career Goals: Becoming a Pittsburgh Police Officer

Hometown: Dover, OH

- **Internship (company/your title):**

Pittsburgh Bureau of Police, Intern.

- **How did you find your internship?**

Another member of the CJ Club who completed this internship told me about it and said what a great experience she had, so I was encouraged to apply.

- **What were your duties?**

To ride along with and shadow different officers and detectives as they completed their work day/night.

- **How many hours per week were you at your internship site?**

I did about 16-24 hours per week until the completion of the internship.

- **What did you enjoy most about your internship?**

The thing that appeals to me the most about being an officer (besides helping people) is the adrenaline rush you get on the job. Don't get me wrong, there were times during this internship that the officer I was with for the day had not much to do, but I witnessed a drug bust and the feeling you get when everything is so high intensity like that was the most enjoyable thing to me.

- **What was the most difficult aspect of the internship?**

I was on a crime scene of a victim of suicide. I think the most difficult part about it was that, in a job like this, a deceased victim's entire life and being is reduced to a body on the ground in a room full of strangers.

Another difficult aspect of the internship was witnessing the police trying to get through to some citizens who were being very unreasonable and uncooperative. On the other spectrum, it's hard to see people in bad situations that sincerely need help and are going through difficult times that are not of their own merit. Public Service is not an easy task and while there are difficult aspects to having a job like this, let alone an internship, it is worth it overall.

- **How did your experience at UPG and in the Criminal Justice department prepare you for your internship?**

Without being at UPG in the Criminal Justice program, there would have been many things that I was talked to about that I would have had no idea what it was. For example, one of the officers asked me about "mens rea" and asked if I knew what that was and we went on to talk about different kinds of statutes and defining cases. We also learn about how the criminal justice system as a whole works from corrections officers to judges. This helped prepare me for the internship because I was prepared to encounter people from different end of the spectrum from the system.

Being at UPG, I also have had the opportunity to tour jails with CJ Club and therefore felt more prepared to enter and visit the Allegheny County Jail and interact with some of the inmates.

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- **How has your internship prepared you for a career?**

This internship prepared me for a career because it was during this internship that I realized that I wanted to work for the City of Pittsburgh. I know what a typical day in the work-life looks like for an officer and I feel as though this experience has helped me see past the superficial aspects of being a cop and assess if this was a job that I truly wanted to have.

- **What recommendations do you have for other students about doing an internship?**

Do not be afraid to speak up if you want to do or try something new within your internship. On scene at the suicide I mentioned previously, the officer took out some latex gloves from his belt, handed them to me, and was like “here, you can touch the body”. Shocked doesn’t even begin to cover what I felt when he told me that and although I did not necessarily want to touch a dead body, I may have to get all comfortable with one in the future like the detectives were and now I realize that I am capable of doing that. If I could not have handled the sight of a dead body in front of me, I may not have decided that this is the job for me.

My internship was also happening whenever the East Pittsburgh police officer shot Antwon Rose and set off a myriad of protests in the city. The Chief of the Pittsburgh Bureau of Police was hosting a city meeting where leaders of the city (public safety council, commanders from some of the police zones, etc.) were invited to meet together with some of the lead protesters to discuss what everyone was feeling and how to keep everyone safe while protesting peacefully. The meeting got intense at times, but I feel as though being there was an invaluable experience. Long story short, do not miss out of any opportunities within your internship.

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