



Chase Hall

B.S. in Business Administration w/ Finance

Graduate: May 2011

Internship at Walt Disney World in Spring 2010

Additional Photos at bottom of article.

Why did you choose to do this experience?

As I was applying to college my senior year in high school, I was given many different pieces of advice, from both recent college graduates and working professionals. The one common piece of advice that I received was to make sure that I completed an internship before I graduate college. At the time I did not think much of it, but as I progressed in my college career, I continued to hear more talk of internships around campus – from fellow classmates, professors, and counselors from Career Services. This made me realize it was time to do research and find an internship.

I began looking at various types of internships, but had difficulty finding one that appealed to me. All of the internships were unique in various ways, but I was looking for the internship that would set me apart from the other graduating members of my class and potentially help me land an exceptional job after graduation.

After taking a vacation in the summer of 2009 to Walt Disney World in Orlando, I learned about an internship program that I truly felt was a once in a lifetime opportunity. This incredible opportunity meant working for Walt Disney World as a College Programmer while earning college credit through classes offered exclusively by Walt Disney World's Disney University. After doing more research about the Disney College Program, I knew that this program was the one for me.

It had everything I was looking for in an internship. It would provide me with the chance to work for a Fortune 100 Company and the opportunity to network with some of the world's most successful executives. In addition to these perks, I would also be learning about how the #1 Family Vacation Destination in the world runs its business so successfully. For me, it was all about finding the internship that fit my major, my personality, and most importantly, my career goals.

What are the benefits of doing this experience?

The benefits of any internship are unlimited, some of which include: gaining experience in your desired field outside the classroom, learning how companies put what is learned in college into practical application, the chance to network with people in your field, and the opportunity to potentially be hired for a job with that company after graduation.

These basic internship benefits seem simple enough, and yes, all internships have them, but you will only gain from them if you take advantage of them. In the Walt Disney World College Program I was not required to take any classes, but I chose to do so because it gave me a much closer look at how Walt Disney World operates their parks and resorts. The knowledge I learned from these classes is sure to apply to any career path that I might choose. The courses will also give me an incredible opportunity to meet and talk with professionals who have a wealth of knowledge on how to be successful in the real world. An internship will only be what you make of it, so be sure to take advantage of every opportunity provided by the internship program you are choosing.

Was there anything unique about your experience that you can share with us?

There are a multitude of things that are unique to the Disney College Program. However, the one thing that I believe to be the most unique to my experience is the opportunity for networking within a company such as Walt Disney World. Networking is a very powerful tool for any person in the workforce, especially those looking to start their career or to advance later on in their field. Networking gives you the opportunity to meet new people and talk with them to learn about their career and gain insight into that particular field. Through networking, you can even make a connection that may lead to a job opportunity or promotion.

Walt Disney World employs over 63,000 people. Within the first few weeks as a participant of the Disney College Program I have already networked with six management level employees, two program trainers, and a multitude of people who have worked for Walt Disney World for decades. Having met these people and keeping them as personal contacts is a priceless resource that could be key to gaining employment with Walt Disney World after graduation. Networking is one of the simplest ways to help you start your dream career, and through an internship, you can learn the skills needed to connect with professionals in your field of interest.

What advice would you give to other students who may be considering a similar experience?

The greatest piece of advice that I could give to anyone that may be considering an experience similar to mine would be to do your research before you decide on an internship. Researching programs will help you learn what opportunities an internship has to offer and will help you get the most out of your experience. I did research on the Disney College Program before I submitted my application. By doing so, once I received my acceptance I knew everything I needed to know about the benefits and classes that the program had to offer.

Completing research prior to starting the program also gave me an idea of what was to be expected of me. Knowing what to expect from your employer and what your employer expects of you allows you to start your work experience the proper way. Research is the

best way to prepare yourself for your experience as an intern and make yourself knowledgeable about the program and the company you will soon be interning for.

