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Leadership Internship

Professor Manuel

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Reflection Four: Personal Place and Mission

At Giffords: An Organization to Prevent Gun Violence, I am the Research and Development intern. Since I am an intern for two separate teams within the organization, I report to two internship supervisors. For the development team, I report to the Grassroots Development Manager, who works on fundraising efforts with low dollar donors. For the Research Team, I report to the Research Manager, who is responsible for carrying out many research projects for the Law Center. In both cases, the Internship Supervisors are the first link in the chain of command. They report to individuals in Director positions, who also have supervisors within the Executive Team. With all of that being said, I still feel like I have a strong and important role within the organization. I am given many responsibilities that are essential to the function of the organization and engage in tasks above and beyond simple secretarial tasks.

For this internship, I have many responsibilities and duties, including many projects that vary from week to week. For the Development Team, I am responsible for checking the information email each morning. This email sends out mass fundraising emails, along with taking inquiries from different organizations. In some cases, I respond to inquiries directly, or ensure that the emails get forwarded to the correct individual in the office. My other responsibilities for Development include researching potential donors for the major gifts team or creating spreadsheets for data collection.

For the Research Team, by daily responsibility is to work on a year-long research tracking project. This requires me to collect the newest academic articles relating to gun violence prevention research and code them for the research team. Some other responsibilities include writing research memos/notes, coding research grants, and analyzing data for the Law Center. My primary focus for the internship is the Research team, but I do dedicate 1-2 hours per day to Development work.

The main reason I chose this internship was because it has given me an incredible number of experiences within one organization. One of the biggest draws was the fact that Giffords is comprised of three entities within one organization. Additionally, I have begun to consider going to law school after graduation, so working with the law center has given me access to many people who can give advice on the law school track.

For the most part, my personal goals align with the organization’s goals. In the summer before my senior year of high school, I lost a close friend to gun violence. Since then, I’ve had the personal goal of reducing the number of gun-related deaths in the United States. Giffords has the same goal of preventing gun violence in the United States and has given me important education tools for teaching individuals on the dangers of gun violence. Additionally, Giffords has shown me that there are many different paths to making a difference for gun violence prevention. First, they have highlighted the use of politics and legislation to make serious change. Second, they have shown me how to use the Courts to your advantage, in order to enact effective change. Finally, Giffords has highlighted many strategies towards making America safer from gun violence.

Overall, this internship has been an extremely positive experience. In addition to gaining political science experience and knowledge, I have also grown in many other aspects. First, this internship has greatly helped my communication skills. I have become more comfortable with written and verbal communication. Additionally, my reading skills have improved significantly since the beginning of the internship. Before starting with Giffords, I was not as comfortable reading academic articles, but I am now extremely comfortable reading and understanding these complex articles. All in all, I am excited to continue growing at Giffords, but I have already received a wealth of information thus far.