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Eli J. Segal Citizen Leader Program

Brandeis Segal Fellows Summer Internship Report

I write this report with a sense of helplessness. Although my mind is bursting with ideas, full of pensive and vibrant thought, I nevertheless feel unable to effectively express my sentiments. The truth is that no amount of words, superficial anecdotes, or other means of conveyance would accurately relate my experiences this summer. This is because my Segal internship has been one of the defining experiences of my life. Though somewhat unprepared for the summer ahead, I learned quickly and have attained skills that will assist me in any future career that I may pursue. Through the careful analysis of administrative frameworks, I have seen office leadership firsthand and have encountered techniques that have exceeded beyond my greatest expectations. Lastly, I made a crucial contribution to a great American non-for-profit organization. Through strenuous days, long hours, and tireless dedication, I feel that I have made a lasting impression on my team at Teach For America. The full story would fill volumes of text and occupy hours of conversation. I only hope this report suffices to provide a brief taste of my Segal Internship on the Recruitment Team of Teach For America.

My summer internship was a great educational experience that taught me, among other valuable lessons, some unique characteristics about good leadership. During my internship I was under the direct supervision of some great (and some not so great) leaders. My direct supervisor, for instance, was a mother of two who worked from home in a location several hundreds of miles away from where I was headquartered. This, however, did not restrain her leadership potential. Through expressed care and exquisite planning, my supervisor earned my trust and respect. By setting out clear goals and being both fair and detailed in her work assignments, I was truly honored to be under her supervision. My contact with leaders at Teach For America taught me much about this important art. Leadership is about building trust and respect, both qualities that are essential in the effective completion of any team-oriented assignment.

All in all, the Segal Foundation provides a fantastic framework to nurture the invaluable trait that is citizen leadership. Any suggestions that I could proffer would be superficial and peripheral. I do believe, however, that more effort could be set up to connect the work we were doing with the work of Eli Segal. This was done to some extent at our orientation meeting in May, and I am truly grateful for this opportunity. Nevertheless, I feel this bond could have been strengthened, a connection I cherish. And of course, more pay would be great! But our stipend definitely sufficed.

My internship this summer was one that gave me unbelievable amounts of responsibility and experience. Right during my first week, Teach For America entrusted me with a corporate credit card and the task of booking hundreds of flights to four of their summer conferences. This required unbelievable patience and organization, skills that I was able to hone through this experience. All in all, I spent nearly 94 thousand dollars on the project. My next main assignment was to help compile a 70-odd page informational book for TFA recruitment directors. They wanted a quick source for vital recruitment statistics and put me on the team attached to the project. Through this task I learned much about the organization as I copy-edited and laid-out various sources of material. The end result was a compact but dense book that was hailed by many of the recruitment team members as a valuable informational resource.

Through the internship I was also able to travel to the conferences that I was helping to plan. The recruitment team met at three times during the summer to train and organize for the upcoming year. By assisting this process, I traveled first to New Orleans to help execute the "UCPA" convention. Once there I was able to bond with the team, learn much about the organization, and see much of the "Big Easy." A few days after this conference, I traveled to Baltimore and helped execute two more recruitment team conferences. In Baltimore, I further assisted with the conference arrangements and got to see another great American city. I even went to an Orioles game with the entire recruitment team. This internship not only gave me all the responsibilities I could ask for, but allowed me to travel as well.

I am so grateful to the Segal foundation for my wonderful internship opportunity. I truly got to serve my country by working at one of our nation's greatest non-for-profit organizations. I also saw leadership in action as I had a variety of experiences through the internship. Overall, this job has changed my life and prepared me for the path ahead. I feel more prepared for a future in national service due to my Segal Internship at Teach For America.