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Co-op Reflection
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My second co-op was on the Culture and Inclusion team at Wayfair. In this position, I worked with my team on the overarching goal of ensuring that every employee feels comfortable and safe to bring their whole selves to work. Day to day, I created and circulated company-wide communications for all Days of Note and Heritage Months on the global Inclusive Community calendar, managed the communal Talent Management support inbox/Inclusive Community inbox, responded to employee ticket requests, and generally served as a liaison between Employee Resource Groups and the company at large. It was not incredibly structured, as working in the DEI field is often dependent on responding to current events of both the company and the world. I knew that working in this field would be interesting, but working here in the last six months had an added layer due to the times. Wayfair has been completely remote since March, and most likely will be through this year as well. It was certainly not what I expected when I accepted the position back in February, but I can still wholeheartedly say that my time at Wayfair was very meaningful and enlightening. Wayfair has certainly adapted to the remote environment, in fact I would not be surprised if after the pandemic the company retains some aspects of the work from home culture.

The Culture and Inclusion team is made up of three sub-teams. There is the Culture and Values team, which is made up of two members and a new co-op for Spring, the Culture and Inclusion Analytics team, made up of three members and a new co-op for Spring, and finally the Diversity Equity and Inclusion, made up of two members, my manager, and me. Finally, there is the Culture and Inclusion lead, who manages us all. We have a full team meeting every other Monday, and due to COVID-19 and the remote environment, two check out meetings to replace the work chatter that we would have had in the office. This is in addition to meetings relating to the projects we were all working on. I was always made to feel like an integral part of the team, and I consider myself lucky to have worked on this team for a time.

One of my main responsibilities was working with the Employee Resource Groups, helping to plan events and circulating their communications with the rest of the company. It was incredibly interesting to work with them during this pandemic, and to help them plan events that were in line with COVID-19 guidelines. Folks that lead Employee Resource Groups do so in addition to their regular responsibilities; it is not a paid position. I truly admire those who take on the additional work of creating spaces where they can highlight an aspect of their identity that they feel may not be as well noticed in the rest of their work. This was probably one of the most enlightening parts of my co-op, as I learned so much about identities that I do not share.

One of my favorite parts of my co-op was answering tickets from employees, both from corporate and out in the field. We responded to a few topics, but the most common, and

the one that meant the most to me, was that transitioning employees would reach out to me with help changing their name and pronoun markers in internal systems. This meant that these employees would share incredibly personal information; there were instances where I was the first person that knew their new pronouns and name. There was one particular instance where an employee reached out on their first day, and I was able to resolve their request within a day. I got a response directly from the employee who wanted to tell me how much it meant to them, how they had experiences with other employers where it took either weeks or months to get resolved. It meant so much to me that I was able to help this person to start their job at Wayfair feeling safe and seen.

I learned a lot about myself and my working style while working at Wayfair. I never thought I would enjoy working at such a large company, but after this co-op I find myself with a different opinion. Although my immediate team was small, I worked with people on many different teams, and it felt as if I was constantly meeting new people and making new connections. I quite enjoyed getting to know so many new people, especially during this time where we have all found ourselves wanting company.

I knew going into this co-op that I would be working in a corporation. This is something I felt that I should experience, to see if I would be able to handle it. I will admit to going into this co-op assuming that I would not like it as much as my first. Honestly, I thought I would not like it all. I am happy to say that I was absolutely incorrect. Although I have been working in a corporate setting, I know that every day I do work that has a positive impact on people, and truly that is all I could ask for. I would happily go back to Wayfair after my graduation in May!