

The background features a series of concentric circles in light gray, some solid and some dashed, creating a ripple effect. A large red speech bubble is centered on the page, containing the main text.

Co-op Reflection!

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Introductions!

- - I am a rising fifth year Human Services major and a Psychology minor
- - I recently completed my second co-op at WilmerHale in the Public Service department from the beginning of January to the middle of March. I had an incredible time there, and though it was cut short because of COVID-19, I got some incredible experience that has helped me decide what I want to do after graduation in May 2021!



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My position and the organization I worked for on co-op

- As I said in the previous slide, I worked for WilmerHale in the Public Service department. I had originally looked into this position because I was thinking that law school might be an option after graduation, however being in this role made me realize that I am interested in social responsibility (maybe in a corporate setting).
- I do think the NUCareers listing described the job well! Everything that was listed I had the opportunity to do including running the middle school mock trial for a few weeks before Boston Public Schools were shut down. It was a paid position which I was really grateful for.

How I spent the majority of my time on co-op (doing what? with whom?)

- I spent the majority of my co-op doing various tasks but I think the overarching theme was event planning. This included a career fair that happens every two years with around 80 panelists, volunteer events for the lawyers with different philanthropy partners, and a middle school mock trial program.
- I spent my co-op working with my boss Anne Bowie. The public service team is just her and the co-op so it was incredible being able to work so closely with her and have a lot of responsibility. While I did have a lot of responsibility, I felt like I was never under any sort of crazy pressure and could go to her with any confusion or questions I had.
- Because our team was just us two, I definitely felt like an integral part of the team. When Anne traveled and was out of the office I think my duties began to evolve into being more on my own and independent. I think my responsibilities evolved because of timing that she was out of the office – I had to run the first few sessions of the middle school mock trial program alone which was intimidating, but I felt prepared.

What I hoped to learn on this co-op

- I initially wanted to get field experience from this co-op. As I approach graduation, I am really trying to narrow down what I might want to do post-graduation. I was thinking of law school, so I applied to some positions at firms to see if any experience in a law firm might help me decide. I was really lucky to be in an environment where everyone wanted to help out and talk to you candidly about their experience in law school and at the firm. I got a lot of great insight into the process of applying to law school and getting a law degree.



The most difficult activity during my co-op



- I would say running the middle school mock trial program was the most challenging part of my co-op. The first session came at a time when my boss was on medical leave, so I was prepping myself and with some lawyers who had volunteered previously. All of the volunteers were awesome and helpful, so I felt supported during the sessions. Two of the other co-ops also came for moral support which I was very thankful for! I became close to the other co-ops during this time as well and feel very lucky to have had that support from other huskies :).



One thing I
learned about
myself and my
work style

- My work and interactions with my boss were very communication based. We would have meetings throughout the day to touch base on projects going on. This was very helpful to me. We would schedule meetings and only talk about one project at a time which was good for organizational reasons.
- I learned a great deal about time management and managing multiple projects at once. There would be big events I was planning while running smaller ones throughout the week. For example, I was planning a large event for career day while simultaneously planning and running the mock trial program. This experience taught me a great deal about prioritization and time management.



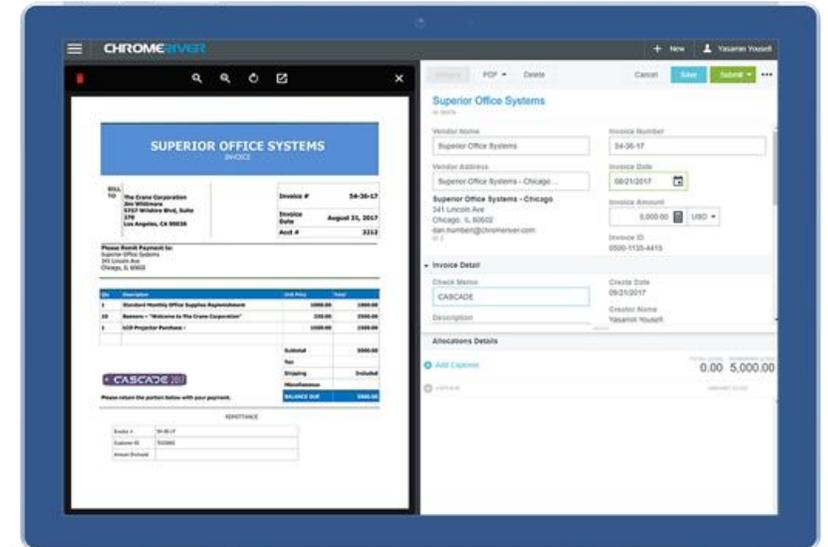
The most exciting
task that I did
during my co-op

- One thing I did during my co-op in the beginning that I did not organize – more brought the lawyers there – was sit in on housing court. It was a lawyer for a day program, so lawyers help clients pro-bono in sorting out different legal issues. I got to shadow two lawyers who were helping one man and it was incredible to see the help they could give him in just a few hours. I saw the process from beginning to end – from meeting the client and getting a background history to going to mediation with the landlord and resolving the issues.
- Just watching the process was so exciting and incredible and I was also able to learn about different nonprofits that run these programs. From here I was able to go to other lawyer for the day programs and shadow and talk to multiple attorneys. This experience is one that definitely stands out to me as one of the most exciting.

A task I did during co-op that I had never done before

One administrative task I did that I had never done before was requesting invoices for law school matching checks through a software called ChromeRiver. It was a very tedious process and I had to request invoices for over 20 different law schools.

I learned how to do it by watching a coworker use the software, asking questions, and doing a trial run while she watched me. Once she showed me, I was able to complete the rest on my own successfully. I am glad I am now able to use this software as I think I could potentially use it in the future.





How my co-op helped me decide future plans!

- I am extremely grateful that I had this co-op experience. Although it was cut short due to COVID-19, I was able to get hands on experience in public service and social responsibility as well as meet some incredible people and make connections. I would meet for coffee with lawyers, which helped in guiding my thought process and realizing while it's good to have a plan, it can evolve from time to time and what is important is making sure you are doing what you love.
- This co-op helped me realize I really do like social responsibility work. I would be interested in pursuing this work in a corporate setting or a smaller nonprofit. I found that this work can be interconnected to my other interests. For example, one of the philanthropy partners for a different WilmerHale office is Special Olympics so being able to connect with this nonprofit made me realize there are ways to explore my other interests within this position.

- I think working at a BigLaw firm taught me a lot about resources, public service, and charitable giving. Attending some of the lawyer for the day programs taught me a lot about structural inequality. The clients that we helped could not afford attorneys and were facing eviction. Though lawyers helped for a day, sometimes this was not enough. If there were not enough lawyer volunteers, some clients would not be matched up with a volunteer and therefore not be given advice on how to approach their legal situation. I realized how many clients could be helped with their legal trouble if there were more resources. However, in firms most value is put on big cases that are helping large corporations.
- While I was somewhat bothered at the last-minute cancellations for volunteer work by the lawyers if something came up in the cases, it became sort of a given that that work was more important than helping people pro-bono because paying clients were relying on the lawyers and the firm. I think the fact that so many people and families were facing being evicted and the help of one lawyer could have changed everything really got to me.
- This experience also made me think a lot about systemic racism. Most of the clients at housing court were people of color. One client we helped faced extreme discrimination in his housing complex and was suddenly told he had to vacate his apartment for no reason. This was a clear example of housing discrimination which is just one of the many facets in systemic racism. Seeing it firsthand made me realize the greater system we are in and my own privilege. I thought a lot about being a student with an internship and the privileged position that puts me in.
- In one last example from housing court, we helped a man who struggled with alcoholism and was in a facility so he could not pay rent. The landlord evicted him right when he got back so he did not have a stable place to live. This made me realize society's lack of understanding of mental health and disabilities and how money is more important than someone's mental wellbeing and recovery.

Personal
Perspective: How
did my co-op
experience
change my view
of society, other
societies, and my
sense of self