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CPSP339P Final: Reflecting on my Internship

Learning objectives: technical writing and editing, teamwork and management, making connections in the Jewish/university world, learning outside of my perspective

I've made incredible strides when it comes to my technical writing skills – like editing, copyediting, tone, narrative, and compiling information. I'm able to go through the writing and editing process much faster than before, thanks to experience I gained working on tight deadlines and compromising with others' schedules. I can identify problems in technical writing quicker and more easily. Through editing coworkers' and my employees' stories, I've learned how to give productive feedback, which they can learn from.

One of my employees, Taylor Levy, began her career with Jewish on Campus around August 2021. Taylor, a psychology student at York University in Canada, had virtually no journalistic experience. Though her work was excellent, it was written like an essay for school; she began with an introduction, a thesis, a body, and conclusion. She relied on drawing information from press reports and websites. I taught Taylor, through multiple rounds of intense editing on each piece and weekly one-on-one meetings, how to write like a journalist. Seek out sources – message them, call them, whatever – don't find them from someone else's work. Start with your big point to get people reading, don't squabble with definitions or history. Tell a story; our job isn't to hand out data, it's to humanize issues, to make people care about our cause through news and narrative. I'm proud to say Taylor has grown into a fantastic journalist. She is about to have a piece about Canadian students fighting antisemitism published on the World Jewish Congress website, in addition to her routine publishing with Jewish on Campus ([here's](#) a piece she wrote about Jewish affixings being torn down at Northeastern University; [here's](#) an older article about antisemitism at the University of Toronto).

In many ways, my improvement in technical writing skills and feedback has intersected with the growth of my teamwork and management skills. By giving better feedback and offering individual meetings, I was able to best meet the needs of everyone around me. I made sure to frequently touch base with Brooke Ramos, an employee who had social troubles initiating conversation and opening up. By scheduling weekly phone calls with her, I learned she was from a small, Catholic town in New Jersey, currently an English major at Rutgers, and converting to Judaism. Based on this background, and her interests, I was able to find work which fit what she wanted. I developed pitches about life as a convert and antisemitism in New Jersey for her.

I also improved my general teamwork and management skills outside of the journalistic realm. I've learned how and how often I need to communicate with my coworkers and

employees, how to best delegate work, and the steps I can take to offer them the best possible support system, whether it be for work or mental health.

An example of this would be around the middle of October, when Brooke fell out of contact with me for two weeks. I reached out, urging her that I was always there to listen, whether she needed accommodations for work or just wanted to talk as a friend. Brooke, after several attempts on my part, responded telling me she was overwhelmed with schoolwork and her job as a residential assistant. Based on this, I was able to do several things: make work accommodations, including extending deadlines and greatly reducing workload; ask friends at Rutgers for the best mental and physical health resources on campus, which I passed along to Brooke; and sent daily texts to Brooke, checking in on her health and wellbeing. I found a balance between being a friend, who genuinely cares about wellbeing, and being a boss.

Intertwined with the growth of my management and communication skills, I created and maintained relationships throughout the past few months. I've been able to work with legal consultants at the Louis D. Brandeis Center for Human Rights Under Law. Lawyers from the Brandeis Center helped me sort out how to send letters to schools' administration asking for change, specifically by enacting students' rights as outlined by the Title VI of the Civil Rights Act. I have worked with representatives from World Jewish Congress to create a system where we share journalistic pieces; working with WJC's all-things-college-generation-guy Yoni Hammerman, two articles from our piece will be published on WJC's website each month. In addition to connections in the professional field, I've also had the opportunity to meet other people my age. I've been able to work with people from Panama, Wales, England, and New Zealand, to help them write letters to administrators or craft crucial documents.

Everything I've done involving people, whether it be meetings, article-editing, or help letter-writing, has taught me more about the Jewish world and college life. I've gotten to learn about referendums at schools, the innerworkings of student government bodies, my legal rights, how university culture varies from country to country, and different traditions and facets of Jewish identity.

I believe each of my original learning objects has been fulfilled. A large part of this is thanks to my boss, Julia Jassey, my coworkers, who have been helpful and knowledgeable without exception, and my wonderful employees. I am beyond lucky to have a workplace that is so cohesive and well-oiled. But, I also think I've played a role in the fulfillment of my learning objectives; I didn't stumble upon these skills or connections by chance or through others, I forged them myself through dedication and time.

Lessons

Before my time at Jewish on Campus, I wasn't able to truly understand that all aspects of leadership skills and development are interconnected. For example, making connections helped me to better understand perspectives of others, improving my editing skills made me better with time management and bonding with my employees, teamwork and management shaped my

social skills. I knew before, from an academic standpoint, that these traits were intercepted. On the job, though, I got to see the actual application and growth of interconnected skills.

I have learned to balance work with school and my other job in customer service. There isn't much to say about balance as a universal "lesson," because it is a learned behavior and a judgement each person must make for themselves. For me, balance was jotting down my priorities and schedule, figuring out where to squeeze in what needed to be done. I tackled articles between classes and homework between work meetings, working down a tight list from "most important" to "could be pushed off until later." For my coworkers, balance was dedicating weekends to Jewish on Campus and weekdays to schoolwork. For my employee, Taylor, balance was doing whatever was tossed at her first, working on a first-come-first-serve basis.

One hard-to-learn lesson for me was learning when to take a step back from a conversation. No one has ever had any ill will, but we have had a couple of run-ins with miscommunication that have resulted in me removing myself from the situation. For one particular project, I edited a page about our organization's values. A coworker, Micah, told me to change a particular phrasing, which I did. The woman who had written the page, Michal, wasn't happy with the change. I realized this wasn't a situation I should have inserted myself in; Micah should have gone directly to Michal. After all, as an editor, my job is to edit work, not insert the desires of others. I told Micah I was going to go with Michal's original phrasing, but if he had a concern, he could communicate directly with Michal or with both Michal and me. Michal and Micah came to an agreement that suited them both, rather than me acting as a telephone between the two and ending up with a mish-mashed compromise.

Changes

We've had some challenges in our organization, between intense schoolwork, coronavirus, and timezones. I couldn't really "change" these challenges, though, because they naturally arose from having a bunch of college-aged employees across the world during a pandemic. That being said, I would make some tweaks for the future. Like, in-person events! Our organization works best with the remote format, but I wish we had a few in-person meetings. I'm not sure how the travel or cost logistics would work, but it would be so nice to be able to meet my coworkers face-to-face. Otherwise, I was extraordinarily happy.

Conclusion

I'll be working for Jewish on Campus beyond this practicum. During this time, I'll be able to continue expanding on my learning objectives from this semester, as well as cultivating skills in adjacent areas. I'm excited to see both the organization and my personal growth.