BSOS STUDENTS: INTERNSHIP SUCCESS

GIS INTERN, MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

What was a typical week like in your internship position?
At my internship, a typical week included me QCing the division’s Single Family Home data layer to search for missing or incorrectly placed points. To do this, I regularly used the county’s multifunctional tool, PGAtlas, as well as ArcMap, Pictometry, and Google Maps. The purpose of this QC was to provide the Planning Department with a more accurate up-to-date dataset of the addresses in the county, which is particularly important for the upcoming Census count. Additionally, I would attend Planning Board meetings with other interns in the department, listening to many cases that discussed the approval and/or further steps for development requests in the county. The college and high school interns were also combined and split into project groups that were given a specific area in the county to visit, photograph, and evaluate how to revitalize the neighborhood. My group was assigned the Bladensburg Rd. Main Street area, which we visited in person and analyzed to come up with a proposal which we then presented to the Planning Board and other members of the department.

What did you enjoy most about the position?
I very much enjoyed attending planning board meetings with fellow interns and working on our revitalization projects. Within the projects, we got to go out to the neighborhood and get a first-hand look at the ways we could use urban planning to remix the area. We also used online tools like PGAtlas and Streetmix to visualize what the neighborhood could potentially look like after our recommendations. Presenting this proposal to such a large group (30+ people) that included the planning board was also a great opportunity and strengthened my presentation skills.

We also had a few summer picnics in my division of the department. These picnics were such a fun way to bring together members of the division, including interns, to have food, play games, and overall have a great time outside of the traditional office setting.

How did your coursework help you in your internship?
My coursework assisted me in my internship because I was already familiar with ArcMap and the functions of GIS.

How did you locate your internship position?
I was encouraged to apply to the internship by a friend who had done the internship as well. After being told about the internship, I did some research, thought it would be a perfect fit, and applied.

Advice for students:
Even if you think you may have missed the deadline or it could be too late and the position may already be filled, apply anyway. I applied very late to this internship and assumed the position was already filled, but I still heard back from someone rather quickly and was fortunate enough to be chosen. Also, even if the internship isn’t your ideal choice or may include something you don’t like, still take advantage of the opportunity, especially if you have no other options. It can turn out to be an amazing experience.

Through this internship, I’ve made lasting relationships with many people in the department which will likely assist me in landing a full time position in the future. Making connections can be very helpful to your career advancement.