

INTERNSHIP SPOTLIGHT

Sara McConnell



Graduation Year: Spring 2018

Semester of Internship: Spring 2018

Major: Criminal Justice and Psychology (double major)

Hometown: Philadelphia

Minor: N/A

Hobbies: Reading, Netflix

Campus Activities: SGA, SAB, Reslife, Village Senate, Student Advocate, Phi Eta Sigma, Psi Chi, Alpha Phi Sigma, CJ Club

Future Plans/Career Goals: Graduate School, Trauma Psychologist

- **Internship (company/your title):**

**Sarah completed two internships at the same time and discusses both throughout this spotlight.*

- Victim Witness Services of Westmoreland County with the County Supervisor
- Private Practice with Trauma Psychologist, Dr. Mucha

- **How did you find your internship?**

- Victim Services- I searched online for local victim advocates to work with.
- Trauma Psychology- I spoke with Dr. Everly and she suggested I work with Dr. Mucha when I spoke about my interest in trauma psychology.

- **What were your duties?**

- Victim Services- I accompanied advocates to court, observed their interactions with victims/ witnesses and helped out with paperwork in the office.
- Trauma Psychology- I accompanied Dr. Mucha on visits to client (both inpatient and in the jails) and helped sort case documents when she worked on death penalty cases as a mitigation specialist.

- **How many hours per week were you at your internship site?**

- Victim Services- I averaged about 20+ hours a week.
- Trauma Psychology- I averaged 15-20 hours a week.

- **What did you enjoy most about your internship?**

- Victim Services- I enjoyed seeing what I learned about in the classroom in real life and learning about the smaller details that go into things. I remember my very first day I sat in on a murder trial and was amazed at how little I knew about court procedures and why things have to happen a certain way.
- Trauma Psychology- I loved going with Dr. Mucha to meet clients or relatives of clients or potential witnesses and interviewing them to gather information to build a mitigation case.

- **What was the most difficult aspect of the internship?**

- Victim Services- I saw how much the advocates had to handle on a day to day basis, usually being overwhelmed with just the amount of paperwork that one single case can generate. So, for me, the hardest part was not being to physically help that much. As an intern, you can only do certain types of paperwork, which wasn't much.
- Trauma Psychology- The hardest part was fitting in the hours. I did 2 internships, so the first half of the semester I focused on one and then switch my focus to the other half. It was also hard because Dr. Mucha uses an attorneys' office in Uniontown (about an hour away) so depending on the day, I'd get to the office, talk with Dr. Mucha for a little bit and then have to leave again to make it back in time for classes.

- **How did your experience at UPG and in the Criminal Justice & Psychology departments prepare you for your internship?**

Both of my majors did help give me a base knowledge of what to expect in both internships since both have a mix of psychological and criminal justice parts. So going into both, I knew the basics needed (like how a courtroom is set up and some of the more common psychological disorders). I think my internships have refined my knowledge.

- **How has your internship prepared you for a career?**

I was lucky enough to get internships in the 2 fields I was considering, so I gained skills and experience from both that actually apply to both fields. I learned the details that go into how each job is done and how it can vary, which allow me to go into a new job with some prior knowledge so I can start off on the right foot.

- **What recommendations do you have for other students about doing an internship?**

DO IT EARLY IN YOUR COLLEGE CAREER. I completely regret not being able to do this earlier in my college career because I wish I had more time to gain more experience and perhaps even learn about related fields.