

University Honors Program News

August 31, 2018

Georgia Southern University

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Supplying New Ideas

August 31, 2018



Hannah Dorough, center at front of stairs, with her team at HD Supply

This past summer, Hannah Dorough (psychology '18) found career inspiration on her internship with the Human Resources Operations team at HD Supply in Atlanta. To call it a summer internship is to stop too soon, however, as she continues to work for the company as a remote human resources coordinator while finishing up her final semester at Georgia Southern.

During the summer Dorough worked primarily with Community Affairs. "I was responsible for complete management of the initiatives and strategic relationships of the Community Affairs department," she said. "I worked on project committees to implement compliance strategy." This semester she is able to work remotely from Statesboro, occasionally traveling to Atlanta, to participate in and lead corporate events.

HD Supply is an industrial distributor across North America. The company

provides a range of services and products for a variety of business needs, such as the newly constructed Mercedes-Benz Stadium in downtown Atlanta.

While on her internship, Dorough was given the freedom to design and plan her own projects such as Take Your Child to Work day, donation drives, and lunch-making events to feed children in Atlanta. She focused on creating events for the betterment of the employees as well as the local community. "I created the company's first employee resource group built around volunteerism to increase retention and promote recruitment to different markets of individuals," Dorough said.

Dorough found herself drawing on her coursework in psychology and human resource management, taking knowledge gained in the classroom and using it in a professional setting. "I was impressed by how much my undergraduate research transferred into workplace skills. After a couple of days on the job, I felt fully competent," she said.

She also found herself drawing on experiences gained as an honors student. For two years, Dorough worked with the Student Advisory Board (SAB). This program created events for the freshmen to build and to develop their friendships in the Honors Living Learning Community. She was also a vital member of the student consolidation committee, a group of students who had the opportunity to present research on the Statesboro-Armstrong consolidation at the 2017 Southern Regional Honors Conference. "My leadership roles within the Honors Program have translated well to the workforce, giving me confidence to work with professionals in this field," she said.

Dorough also found a mentor through this internship in her boss, Christine Burrell. "Christine is the director of HR Operations, and my team consisted of some of the most powerful and intelligent people in the industry. My boss quickly taught me the importance of believing in yourself and your competencies. She has been a driving force in some of my career decisions, and as the Chief HR Officer she is living proof that you can climb the ladder if you work hard and treat others kindly. By having a strong support system, I was able to show myself my worth and to see the true value of human resources," Dorough said.

The range of projects Dorough worked on this summer was diverse; however, she found her work with corporate social responsibility to be the most rewarding. She was able to affect the work lives of HD Supply employees. "I was recognized by the CEO as an embodiment of the company's values, as my work played an integral part in forming more of an intimate 'work family' environment within our large, new headquarters building," she said.

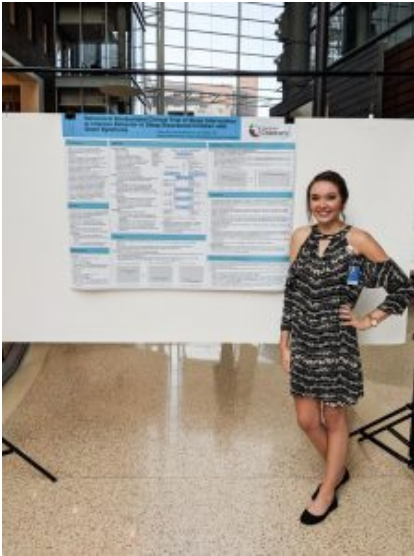
While summer may have ended, Dorough's work with HD Supply continues. "I am doing the same exciting work that I did during my internship, but now as a part-time employee," she said. And when she graduates a semester early in December, she will have valuable experience to take with her.

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Summer Research at a Children's Hospital

August 31, 2018



Catie Shipp presents her research.

Finding the perfect summer research experience sometimes requires asking the right questions of the right people. Catie Shipp (psychology '19) did just that and participated in a Summer Undergraduate Research Fellowship (SURF) at the Cincinnati Children's Hospital. She was one of 129 students selected from a pool of almost 1400 applicants, and in her time there, she gained valuable hands-on research experience. She found herself working at a high level on various research projects and has been asked to return next year as the clinical research coordinator within the Department of Developmental Disabilities and Behavioral Pediatrics.

The program paired each fellow with a mentor, and Shipp worked with Dr. Anna Esbensen. With her mentor's guidance, Shipp worked on four of her ongoing research projects. "These projects aimed to improve sleep and behavior, and also to test cognitive measures for school-aged children with Down syndrome. I took on a variety of roles throughout the summer which included creating data sets, entering data, scoring psychological assessments, creating and prepping research folders, organizing protocol, creating visual schedules, creating stimuli for research visits, and preparing recruitment for future and ongoing studies," Shipp said.

Her work culminated in a capstone project, presented at the University of Cincinnati SURF Research Symposium. Shipp researched a topic in her field of interest while gaining professional networks. "The SURF program provided many outside opportunities for students to learn and to connect with fellow students within the

program. For instance, I attended a professional development workshop, a networking mixer, and a SURF summer picnic to name a few," she said.

Working in a top tier national hospital provided Shipp with countless opportunities to shadow top-ranked professionals. She said, "I was so fortunate to observe amazing psychologists within the department who were so willing to let me see what their job entailed and were always eager to answer my many questions that I would have after each visit. I also learned and observed evaluations, assessments, and treatments performed by various mental health professionals." Internships provide the necessary skills for students to succeed in a future career or trade.

Both Dr. Esbensen and Emily Hoffman, the clinical research coordinator, with whom Shipp worked with daily, had an impact on Shipp's overall experience this summer. They gave her the freedom to work on large projects, trusting in her work ethic and knowledge about the material. "My mentor, Dr. Esbensen, never ceased to amaze me with her hard work, intelligence, and passion for the work she did. She was so encouraging and informative, and she really helped me to feel confident about my future. Further, Emily Hoffman was an amazing role model to me. It seemed like she always had all of the answers," she said.

Shipp's appreciation for her mentor was reciprocated. Dr. Esbensen appreciated Shipp's dedication and enthusiasm that contributed to the research. "Catie met and exceeded the high standard set by prior SURF students. Her efforts on our project measuring behavioral and cognitive outcomes for children with Down syndrome were invaluable to our team. She supported our recruitment efforts, our ability to conduct day-to-day evaluations of research participants, and our ability to analyze clean data," Dr. Esbensen said.

"Catie was able to quickly and independently perform assigned tasks with a limited need for supervision. She asked insightful questions about tasks and was clear and confident in her communication, and she demonstrated a level of professionalism beyond her schooling," Dr. Esbensen said.

This fellowship allowed Shipp to push herself and to discover new passions. Before this summer, Shipp was unsure about what her future after Georgia Southern University held. "Upon entering this position, I had never considered working with children with developmental disabilities," she said. "To be honest, it was a part of the field that really intimidated me because I knew little-to-nothing about it. However, with the amazing guidance of both Dr. Esbensen and Emily, I have acquired a new interest that I am really considering pursuing upon graduation."

One lesson Shipp took from her time at the hospital was to take risks. She would have never known about this fellowship if she did not directly email the head of the Clinical Psychology Department. This fearlessness to reach out gave Shipp an unforgettable experience as well as a career in a field of interest. Shipp hopes that other students will take advantage of the resources on campus that will lead them to experiences during and after college.

"I would encourage all students to look for opportunities to gain whatever hands-on experience that they can. I learned so much about the field of psychology, the professional world, and about myself as a worker and a student that I would never have learned by only taking my scheduled classes. There are so many opportunities out there, but you definitely have to be bold by communicating to those who can help you to get those positions," she said. "Further, these positions lead to amazing relationships and skills that are so important, and overall these experiences are so helpful in the long run. So I

would just encourage everyone to be on the lookout for opportunities, and to not be afraid to step outside of your comfort zone to chase after your career goals.”

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Lifting the Heavy Weight in the Classroom and in the Gym

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Finding rigor not just in the classroom but also in the gym, Michael Cohen (health science '20) placed seventh overall in the world at the 20 & Under World Championships for weightlifting in Tashkent, Uzbekistan. This Olympic style event included both the snatch and the clean and jerk.

Competing in weightlifting since he was four years old, Cohen has traveled all over the world for competitions, including Japan, Peru, Mexico, Poland, and Russia. His favorite perks from all of this international travel are being able to explore different countries, try food from other cultures, and learn phrases from the languages spoken in each new country. He also enjoys swapping USA team gear for other nations' team gear as souvenirs.

Cohen is coached by his father and grandfather. In fact, weightlifting runs in the Cohen family. Cohen's grandfather made the U.S. Olympic Team in 1956; unfortunately, he broke his neck and was not able to compete. His father, Michael, Sr., made the Olympic Team in 1980 but could not compete because the team boycotted the Olympics that year. After that, Michael, Sr., turned to coaching. He is a two-time head coach for the U.S. Olympic women's weightlifting team (2000 and 2004) and has personally coached several Olympians. Cohen's younger brother, William (psychology '22), also competes internationally.

He hopes to be the first in his family to represent the U.S. in the Olympics. "Being able to go to the Olympics would be the pinnacle of what I could achieve in the sport."

He jokes that if he does not make it, he is not allowing his kids to follow the family path, as the family may be cursed.

He has had his own share of obstacles to training and competing as well. During his senior year of high school, he had to undergo back surgery to correct a herniated disc. The herniation was caused by a birth defect in his back that was further damaged during a missed lift. Specifically, the surgery was a micro discectomy, meaning part of the disc was removed.

Cohen said, "It was the toughest mental challenge I've had to face. You have to convince yourself that you're not weak and you will get stronger. I used to tell myself, 'I've done it before; I can do it again.'" With this mentality, Cohen was able to make an impressive comeback and win the 20 & Under Nationals in 2017, five months after the surgery.

As a junior on the Armstrong campus working towards a health science degree, with a focus in human performance and fitness management, Cohen has consistently earned a 4.00 GPA while maintaining his rigorous weightlifting training schedule and being an employee at his gym.

When asked about how he has been able to balance all of his activities, Cohen said, "There's a lot of planning and organization that goes into succeeding both in school and in weightlifting. Many times, I'm studying on the plane and planning out my work, up to four weeks in advance."

Cohen also has another time management strategy that involves being focused. "You also have to have a set time that you're going to lift, and while you're lifting, you can't be worrying about anything else. The same goes for school." Cohen's experiences in weightlifting and in academics have led him to pursuing a master's degree in public health, and he ultimately hopes to teach, consult, or open his own gym.

Cohen says he loves weightlifting because of its focus on self-expression and personal growth. "The sport is individual: your success or failures depend solely on your performance," he said.

When asked what motivates him, Cohen said, "There's always someone that's lifting more, and the only way to get to that point is to keep training." That same motivation and persistence are what helped push Cohen to succeed academically.

For now, his focus is on his next competition – The American Open series 3 held in Las Vegas this September. The Georgia Southern Honors Program wishes Cohen the best of luck!



Cohen at the 20 & Under World Championships (photo: IWF)

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