Internships: Christina Henderson '08

Christina Henderson '08

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarexchange.furman.edu/furman-magazine

Recommended Citation
Henderson, Christina '08 (2014) "Internships: Christina Henderson '08," Furman Magazine: Vol. 57 : Iss. 1 , Article 18.
Available at: https://scholarexchange.furman.edu/furman-magazine/vol57/iss1/18

This Article is made available online by Journals, part of the Furman University Scholar Exchange (FUSE). It has been accepted for inclusion in Furman Magazine by an authorized FUSE administrator. For terms of use, please refer to the FUSE Institutional Repository Guidelines. For more information, please contact scholarexchange@furman.edu.
Internships Christina Henderson ’08

The path to Washington

When I first arrived on the Furman campus, political science was not my path. I was an intended Psychology/English double major, my advisor was in the Psychology Department—that’s what I planned to do. But college is full of these little ah-ha moments that can change everything. The day after the 2004 election was my first.

It was a grim day, and I came back to my hall to find someone of the girls already thinking ahead to 2008. One said, ‘I could never vote for a woman for President because America would look weak in the eyes of the international community.’ To my surprise, the others agreed and then asked me what I thought. I was stunned. Rarely am I ever at a loss for words, but in that awkward moment I could only respond: ‘I’m going to prove you wrong!’ The vivacity with which I responded to those girls revealed that I was not satisfied with just observing and commenting on the political process. I wanted to live it. The next day I changed my major to political science.

My sophomore year I went to Washington, D.C., for Furman’s Study Away program there. I was taking three classes with a Furman professor and also interning at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services in the Office of the Secretary. My time at HHS was right when avian influenza—bird flu—was at its peak.

I gave up chicken for a while and became a walking dictionary on bird flu because I was responsible for creating the glossary and Frequently Asked Questions pages for the government’s one-stop website, PandemicFlu.gov. At 19, I was contributing content for government websites, going to high-level meetings, interacting with then Secretary Michael Leavitt and the Surgeon General.

I was not ready to go home that summer, so I interned with Hillary Clinton, who was then serving in the United States Senate. But because it was unpaid, I applied for Furman Advantage and got it. $1,500 for my next experience. With those funds, I worked for her state director and supported the daily operations of the Senate office. I met Senator Clinton my first day, helped staff her for events when she was in New York City, compiled her personal briefing book, and toured President Clinton’s office in Harlem. I left New York with Clinton’s dare-to-compete spirit. It inspired me.

“I met Senator Clinton my first day, helped staff her for events when she was in New York City, compiled her personal briefing book, and toured President Clinton’s office in Harlem. I left New York with Clinton’s dare-to-compete spirit. It inspired me.”

—CHRISTINA HENDERSON

In the winter of my junior year, I participated in Furman’s study abroad program through sub-Saharan Africa. Over two months, I traveled with 35 students and three professors to Namibia, Botswana, and South Africa. We did homestays, worked at an orphanage, camped in the Kalahari Desert, climbed mountains in South Africa, and visited the infamous Robben Island in Cape Town where Nelson Mandela spent 18 years in prison.

The day I got back in the country I had an email from one of Senator Clinton’s senior policy advisors asking me to join Clinton’s presidential primary campaign in South Carolina. I worked on the campaign full time while still serving as president of the student body. It was one of the most intense, and yet rewarding learning experiences of my life. Funding from the Furman Fellows award that I received the fall of my senior year enhanced that experience allowing me to travel to Iowa, Ohio, and North Carolina for the primaries. I would have never survived that combination of experiences and factors without the support of the faculty, administrators, and staff at Furman.

After graduating from Furman and a couple of years working on Capitol Hill, Christina went on to earn a master’s degree in public policy from Princeton University. She now lives in Washington, D.C., where she works for D.C. Councilmember David Grosso as his deputy chief of staff. She handles his policy portfolio crafting new legislation and political strategy.

#WhyFurmanMatters

Because it is the type of institution that pulls more potential out of you in four years than you ever believed you were capable of.

—CHRISTINA HENDERSON ’08
FU MAN INTERNSHIPS

INTERNSHIPS ARE CONSIDERED A VITAL PART OF THE ACADEMIC LEARNING PROCESS AT FU MAN. More than two-thirds of the student body complete an internship during their time at Furman, pursuing opportunities in Greenville, internationally and throughout the United States. Furman students work with the University's internship Office and alumni and parent connections to foster valuable experiences beyond the classroom.

FU MAN ADVANTAGE

THANKS TO SUPPORT FROM FU MAN DONORS, students wishing to participate in an internship or research project may apply for Furman Advantage funding. Hundreds of these opportunities are funded each summer, providing competitive fellowships for Furman students who would otherwise receive little or no financial support for their efforts.