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Internship Reflection

I was a design intern for Robert T Foster Design Studio from May 31 to August 13, 2021. I am pursuing a Bachelor of Fine Arts in interior design, with a minor in French. I chose this particular internship because the company reflected what I want in my future career: to be part of a residential firm specializing in houses. This particular company focuses on custom home design, which means that every house design is different from every other one. I chose this internship over the others I interviewed for due to its significant emphasis on residential interior design work. My other options included a professional home staging firm and a corporate design firm. The area of specialization during my internship was residential design with an emphasis on Revit and Enscape.

Robert T Foster Design Studio consists of one architect who doubles as a designer. Robert Foster outsources contractors and builders for his projects. Foster is an accomplished residential designer with over thirty years of experience. His designs can be seen throughout North and South Carolina, including the cities of Charlotte, Raleigh, Greensboro, Lake James, and Columbia, as well as the states of Illinois, Tennessee, and Texas. He has also served on the Architecture Review Boards for several local North Carolina communities. Foster has also contributed to Builder/Architect Magazine and has judged numerous home design competitions. In addition, he has designed the two Charlotte homes for Extreme Makeover: Home Edition.

My responsibilities during my internship consisted of creating Revit Enscape renderings and walkthroughs of each ongoing project, taking notes during client meetings, and editing CAD drawings from working drawings to marketing drawings, which are shown to clients. My regular activities consisted of taking the projects my boss was working on, with the floor plans and elevations, into Revit. I was the only intern working at Robert T Foster Design Studio, and

during my internship, I created a Revit model of each home's first floor and the second floor only when requested. From the Revit model, I created Enscape renderings of specific areas on the first floor (the kitchen, family room, outdoor terrace, and any other spaces that had interesting ceiling details) and a comprehensive walkthrough in Enscape. A few times, I sat in on client meetings and took notes while my boss and clients talked. Anything he missed when explaining details, I would jot down so that he would have it on hand for later.

What I was able to apply from my academic coursework to my internship was my knowledge of Revit and Enscape and what I know about residential home design. My application of residential home design was the placement of kitchen appliances if not specified on a floor plan and the height of windows in particular rooms. The skills that I developed during my experience were those I gained in Revit. I had to teach myself how to do certain things in the program to complete the renderings and walkthroughs requested by my boss. In particular, I identified that I need to further develop my knowledge of roof plans and how to draw them on CAD. I do not want to be reliant on how Revit will automatically create one once you draw it. The biggest challenge I encountered was the deadline for each rendering and walkthrough for each home design I provided. This pushed me out of my comfort zone because I am used to the slower pace of how projects are timed out in our courses; rather than a two or three-day deadline, I had to complete an entire Revit model with renderings and a walkthrough in a single day.

The new questions raised from this experience were about the advantages and disadvantages of joining a residential design firm specializing in custom homes. The clients have wish lists a mile high, making the projects a lot more stressful than they need to be. The most important thing I learned about myself from this experience is that when given the right motivation and time, I can find the answer I am looking for instead of giving up when I cannot

find it on the first try. During this internship, the most significant accomplishment was when I heard feedback from my boss about the renderings I did and the clients' reactions after viewing them. In light of this internship experience, my personal goals have evolved from wanting to find a job in any residential firm specializing in homes that sparks my interest to a residential firm that takes part in custom home design and renovations.

The specific actions that I plan on taking in the next thirty days to move forward in my career preparation are to update my Instagram page for interior design with my internship projects, think of the name I want to use for my future company/firm that I could create post-graduation, and figure out what programs I am most skilled in and continue to enhance those skills. I plan to complete the updates of my Instagram page and create a company/firm name by the end of September. I plan on figuring out which program I am most skilled at by the end of October.

My experience during this internship was enjoyable and let me get some insight into what it is like to work in residential home design, more specifically, custom home design. While some things were challenging, they did not hinder my ability to complete my given tasks. This internship allowed me to enhance my skills and knowledge in Revit and Enscape, which will help me with my capstone project in the upcoming semester. Being able to sit in on client meetings while taking notes allowed me to see the process of how a custom home comes together. The actions I plan on taking in the next month will help me move forward in being ready to go out into the real world, especially updating my Instagram page because of how social media has become a vital part of networking. Overall, my internship with Robert T Foster Design was beneficial to my future career as an interior designer.