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## Andersen, Burke Intern at Branding Firm Thanks to Alum's Support

Aug. 13, 2015

BLOOMINGTON, Ill.— Two Titans interned this summer at the Chicago office of VSA Partners, a brand and marketing firm where Patrick Palmer '87 is Discipline Lead for Strategy and Analytics.

Michelle Burke '15, a **business administration** major with a concentration in marketing is a post-baccalaureate Strategy Intern in Consumer Marketing. Derek Andersen '16 (Wheaton, Ill.), an **English-writing** major, interned in the Writing and Creative department. Both students were introduced to VSA through Palmer's recruiting visits to the Illinois Wesleyan campus.

Burke said her tasks included conducting competitive analyses to help the team gain better understanding of their clients and the environments in which they compete.

"I'm also involved in a summer-long project to create VSA's own digital marketing strategy," she said. "I'm working with a small group to create a year-long content calendar for digital marketing. The guidelines will include a number of variables including target audiences, paid media strategy, content curation and ROI goals."

Burke said she loves strategy because it involves problem solving and breaking down problems into simple solutions. "This internship has given me great experience in building my knowledge of strategy," she said.

As a student Burke was a member of the women's golf team, Alpha Gamma Delta sorority, Titan Leadership Program, IWU Ambassadors and Alpha Kappa Psi business fraternity.

Andersen enjoyed the creative side of agency work, where he wrote executive biographies, crafted social media hashtags and even named a jewelry product during his 10-week internship. "My biggest project was writing stories for Cargill's website on the company's recent innovations and philanthropic efforts," said Andersen.

He found the position by interviewing with Palmer at the **Hart Career Center**. "I knew this opportunity at VSA Partners would allow me to use my creativity," said Andersen, who said he has wanted to work in advertising for a long time. "This internship was a great opportunity to break into the industry."

Andersen said the internship also has validated his choice of majors. "Some of my peers have told me how impractical they think my major is, but this internship has allowed me to apply all the skills I've learned," he said. "I've written in different voices, tones, and narrative styles, and I've crafted content that evokes emotion. It's been rewarding to see my coursework translate to the real world."

At Illinois Wesleyan Andersen is a member of the men's cross country and track and field teams and has published his work in *Tributaries*, a campus literary magazine publishing student prose, poetry and artwork.

More than 200 Illinois Wesleyan students completed internships this summer at locations across the country and around the globe. Illinois Wesleyan students increasingly participate in internship opportunities; the **most recent data** shows more than 70 percent of the Class of 2014 participated in at least one internship opportunity.



Pat Palmer '87 spoke on "Careers for the Eternally Curious" as part of the Hart Career Center's alumni speaker series.



Michelle Burke '15



Derek Andersen '16