

ZINE **DEDICATED** TO

DEMYSTIFYING INTERNSHIPS

NOT AS SCARY AS YOU THINK



Evolve Collaborative Jai Lu Ni, Designer Trudy Chin, Intern

Murmur Creative Dani Ramsby, Designer Sloane Ackerman, Intern **Interviewers** Shea Satterlee Whitney Mokler



Whitney- Hi Dani, Thank you for the interview. You had said you are in charge of hiring the web interns at Murmur.

Dani- Well, Sloane is actually our first web intern. We've had a few other interns who did more branding and packaging, but yes this is our first time with a web intern. So this is all kind of new to us. I was the one who found Sloanes portfolio. Me and Zipora, she manages the internship program, conducted the interview and I ultimately got to make the decision on who we hired because I am the one who is managing her.

That's great. When looking for interns do you have people who come to you or do you actively go out and look for interns outside?

We actively look for interns, though we have had a mix of both. We are looking very heavily for interns at fresh every year. That's probably our primary source for looking for interns. We will hand out business cards at fresh, but sometimes we'll reach out to potential interns personally. Sometimes they will reach out to us expressing interest in an internship. I'd say we consider both types of people when looking for an intern.

When you are looking for interns what are attributes that you are looking for? More specifically, because you're more on the web side, but maybe also in general.

So, for me when we were looking for a web intern I was looking very specifically for someone who is really detail oriented. I think attribute where you grow a lot after graduating is you really realize that you need to pay attention to every little detail in a project because all of it is important. What I liked about Sloane's portfolio is she really considered a lot of the smaller details that can easily get overlooked when working on a school project because you are limited on time or resources. That told me she has good time management skills and she has a good understanding of user interaction specifically to web. With web design that's especially important because you are creating something that is interactive. So, you need to be considerate of every single one of those interactions. That was probably the main thing I was looking for. I also was really impressed by her level of involvement in school. She did a lot of projects kind of like what you are working on now for A+D. She played a big role in doing promotion for Be Honest one year and so her portfolio really went into a lot of detail with what she contributed to Be

Honest. I was really impressed by her taking the extra initiative to do something outside of just her school projects. It showed me that she's really hard working and also really passionate about what she does.

Cool, thats great. So, do you think that after Sloane you will continue to host a web intern?

I would like to yeah. Murmur started primarily doing branding and packaging and I think that's why they've had their internship program for a bit longer than we have, but I think we want to follow suit and as our web team grows continue to seek out interns.

How long is the web internship?

It's 3 months and then we kind of go from there. It's very open ended where we'll start small usually have the intern come in maybe 3 days a week and then there is always room for that to change throughout the duration of the internship. What we may offer to the intern may vary at the end of the internship.

Is it a paid program? Yes it is. Oh, that's cool.

It pays actually pretty well as far as an internship goes.

What kind of projects do you have her working on when she is here?

We have Sloane doing everything that a regular designer would do. Obviously she is being managed by our team. So she is not expected to be as, I don't want to say self motivated, but for example for me I'm often seeking out work to do. Whereas, I am giving her very specific direction, but she is working on all the same stuff that I would be working on doing wireframes, working directly with our content team, we're even open to her putting input on what she thinks for strategy. After doing wire framing we go into design. So, she'll be creating different design directions for clients, but with the help of the other designers. Theres me and then we have TJ, who is also a PSU alumni, who

works remote. We'll work with her to create mock-ups and then she also gets to, we haven't gotten to this stage yet, but when she gets to the point where we do a development hand off she'll also learn how to work with developers. It's a very hands on program. She's definitely not making any coffee runs or anything like that. She's doing everything that you would do as a designer at an agency.

...and you're mainly doing the design aspect, you're not actually doing the coding?

That's right. We have three in house developers and one freelance developer. They're doing all of the development, but it is also very important for the designers to have a grasp on how development works and maybe have a light experience in coding, which I know PSU offers and thats great. Like the classes that PSU offers are a great foundation for getting into web design because it will teach you the fundamentals of what is and is not possible from a development stand point.

So you just don't create something that is completely impossible for a developer to make.

Yeah exactly. It's important for us to know what they're capable of doing in development.



MURMUR CREATIVE

in the future?

IF YOU GET A LEAD OR

This is your first time hosting an intern, what are aspects of the program that you really enjoy, things

you have learned, things you would like to do different

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I really like the fresh perspective that Sloane brings to the team. She is a very quick learner and I think that maybe comes from her being a fresh graduate so she can actually teach me some things too which is kind of fun. It also forces me to look at my process because I am then teaching my process to someone else. It helps me to reevaluate my process and also just having extra help out on projects is immensely helpful.

Cool, did you ever have an internship?

I did. My internship was actually very print focused. I was an intern at "The Study." Some of the students might be familiar because that's the studio run by Yvonne Perez Emerson. She sometimes does adjunct teaching at PSU, but she found me through Fresh. I interned for her for 3 months. We did a lot of layouts, but mostly for print so designing a lot of event brochures and things like that. I think that was a really great segue for me to get into web because it was so layout focused, but I did also get experience doing like branding and print design.

So, Yvonne contacted you via fresh to do that specific internship?

Yea well I linked up with her at fresh, she checked out my portfolio, let me know that they were looking for an intern, and gave me her contact information. Then it was on me to reach out and let her know I was interested. I think that's really important for people looking for internships to understand. If you get a lead or someone expresses interest in you for an internship you should be emailing them immediately. Like within a day I would say to let them know you are interested.

Do you have any advice for people looking for internships other than being really diligent about contacting people back?

Yea I would say that is hands down the biggest one. I think also, going back to what I said at the beginning is, making sure you are paying a lot of attention to details in your portfolio because that is what's going to set you apart from just a student to someone who an agency is going to want to work with. Just being really good with communication and quick with your responses. Don't be afraid to really put yourself out there. Apply for a lot of internships, you know things like that.

Great. Thank you for your time I appreciate you talking to me. Ya of course.



ACKERMAN

Shea- How did you find out about the Murmur Creative internship?

Sloane- I got a linkedin message and an email from my boss, whose name is Dani, asking if I would possibly be interested in an internship position. I emailed her back and asked her kinda just generally what the vibe was: like how many hours a week it was and what the role was focused around. She gave me a brief description and was like 'We'd love to have you come in and interview.' We set up a time and did that.

I'd actually met Dani through Fresh. She was somebody that I had spoken to pretty thoroughly at the Fresh event. At the time they weren't looking for anybody. At Fresh she kinda asked me what my plans were after graduation and all that kind of stuff. She was like 'Yeah, we usually have interns and like blah blah blah,' but nothing really worked out then. But then it just kinda happened that they got a bunch more—I'm a web design intern—so they got a bunch more web design projects and were just a bit overwhelmed and needed somebody.

So at Fresh were they mostly interested in your web design stuff?

Yeah. After my interview, we were casually talking and she was like 'That really set you apart from other people, you were literally one of about two or three people at Fresh that had web or digital work in your portfolio and that was your focus.' So, I guess that helped me.

Did you have a website?

Yeah, my portfolio was all digital. The only printed collateral I had at Fresh was my resume, plus a giveaway thing that I did. I gave away metal straws and a little pull-out

booklet thingy that held the straw essentially with some content in it. But yeah, my whole portfolio was digital with web and branding focus. So, kinda niche.

Before that, had you been applying a ton and feeling like you weren't finding anything?

No. Coming out of Fresh, I had some really in-depth conversations with a handful of people. One of those was a woman that worked for a bigger, more corporate consulting agency. They reached out and asked if I would be interested in interviewing for a Junior position, actually. I went through a whole interview process which was like three interviews. I met with their whole team and I met with everybody and they went through all my work. That was super cool just for the learning experience. I hadn't had a super in-depth interview process prior to that. I actually was offered that position. It was a proper job, benefits, the whole shebang which was really cool, but I ended up turning that down just because I wanted to travel over the summer and it just wasn't gonna work out for me.

I also remember you mentioning it being super corporate there.

Yeah, it was really corporate and they were going through a lot of growth at the time which was really cool. But the reason I turned it down, primarily, was that the only reason I would've taken a job at that time, and given up my travel opportunities, would be if it was my dream job and I was really passionate about the work that they were doing: and that just really wasn't the case. So I politely declined. I also had been talking to Taryn Cowart, she's a professor here but she alsoworksatInstrument. IhaddoneajobshadowwithheratInstrumentbeforelleftformytrip as well and I met a ton of people there but the day before I was supposed to do that, a woman that works on a different team at Instrument had reached out. She asked if I was open to freelance and asked to meet. I met with her that day and kinda interviewed with her and another gentleman on that team and we talked about doing some web stuff for them. But, again, I was leaving for my trip and had already booked it so it just didn't work out time-wise. They

said 'when you get back, shoot us an email and we'll reconnect'. So then, when I got back, or, not even when I got back, when I actually in fucking Florence, Italy, I got an email from their recruiting team saying, "Hey, Sloane, we're hiring Junior designers, and Tsilli Pines (who's the head of creative over there), really loves you.' When I got home, like two days later I had three interviews at Instrument that day with three different groups of people.

What was that like?

I was so fucking nervous. They sent me an actual itinerary. I was there for three and a half hours. They're so kind so it wasn't that intense, I definitely projected my anxiety onto the situation. It was interesting because each interview was different. Some were a lot more conversational, some were more inquisitive, some were more focused on who I am as a human and a designer, and some were more focused on how I am as a person. It was really interesting to get a holistic, in-depth experience with a variety of people in a variety of different roles. Not all of them were designers, a majority of them were, but some of them were developers and other people. It went really well and then I had another set of interviews, there were only two that time. Then I had another i nterview and the next day, Murmur reached out to me. They needed a response within a few days and I hadn't heard back from Instrument. I emailed them saying, 'Hey, don't mean to pressure you but I kinda need to know what's up'. I ended up not getting the position which was totally fine and it actually worked out. I ended up getting the Murmur gig which was a great opportunity as well.

All of these companies were interested in your web design primarily? Yeah, for sure. What was your interview with Murmur like?

I had one interview with them. I interviewed with my boss now and a designer on the branding side of the company. It was about an hour. I didn't show any work, they had already looked at my portfolio. I had also talked to my boss Dani really thoroughly at Fresh and walked her through all my projects. In a sense, that was like an interview. This one was much more conversational. They asked questions like, 'What do you think your greatest strength on a team is?' But it was mostly just chatting and them trying to see my perspective on working.

Did you feel more at home with Murmur as opposed to the intense Instrument interview process?

Gosh, no. Instrument wasn't intense at all. Those conversations were so lovely, the people were so kind, and they were really easy and didn't make me feel uncomfortable. I was just nervous going into it because I wanted it. There was no pressure there. I think I definitely felt more at home at Instrument with the people. That place has always felt up my alley. But, I love Murmur. Everyone there is so kind, it's an easy place to work, and it's really small. That's really nice. It's very intimate. You're five feet away from your creative director, and your senior designer and developer. On Wednesdays, we have team lunch where we all sit down together and each lunch together that they provide. It's a nice gig.

What kind of work are you doing there mostly?

Our web design team is three people including myself. It's two senior designers and then me. So, I do everything and anything from edits on projects that are going in development, to round one design concepting, or research for clients. Today, I'm working on a Shopify template which is a headache. One



benefit of working for a smaller agency, you get to touch a lot more stuff. They're open to having me sit in on meetings. I went to a design pitch and met with clients.

Was it like Mad Men?

Kind of! It was in a meeting room with a big screen and every-body was like (Sloane crosses her arms). I just want to teach and learn. It's a good environment. I like working in general. I mean, you definitely get days where it's like you've finished a lot of shit and maybe doing small edits on wireframes and you want to just crawl into a hole. But, that's any job.

What's your favorite kind of work you've done there?

I've always liked puzzles. I like feeling pressured to complete things. I like things with a quick turnaround. Last week was really crazy because we had three web projects in final-round going into development. We had nitpicky shit that needed to get changed. My boss was out and the other designer is remote so it was just me. Everyone was like, "Sloane, fix this!" I like shit like that, I like pressure. It's exciting. It's not necessarily the most aesthetic or design-centric shit. I like pushing myself. I like seeing how fast but well I can do things. I also really like process and research.

To me, putting together concepts for designs is really fun. I love going on site-inspire and thoroughly analyzing other people's websites and trying to process why a designer made the decision that they made. Part of me thinks that I should someday go into strategy. The other day I was making a product grid for some site and I fucking spent an hour researching button distance and the best practices. The user experience for stuff like that is so interesting to me. I want to know why you should be doing it a certain way. I love aesthetics too but, for me, going in-depth and finding out why it should be a certain way is really interesting.

Do you think this internship has helped you realize that about yourself?

No, I don't think so. As I went through school and got towards the end, I had to figure out that at a certain point you have to stop. I am one of those people that can research fucking buttons for an hour and be engrossed in it. But you're never gonna get anything fucking done if that's how you live your



life. I always like internships because it puts you in an alien environment that you have to adapt to and you grow as a human being regardless. Sure, you'll probably pick up fundamental skills of the technology. Whether it's learning new technology or not. I don't even use the creative cloud for what I do now, I'm mostly in Figma. It's great but also difficult because I had to make something for a freelance client in InDesign the other day and my brain was like, 'This is so fucking stupid'. I almost wanted to build it in Figma because it seemed easier. When I graduated, I was worried about mostly wasn't necessarily finding a job. I mean, yes, that's in the back of your head because of money and bills and stuff. But, the main thing for me was finding opportunities to grow and learn because after you finish University, you're really not exposed to traditional learning environments. I was always worried about driving myself to learn things. I think internships provide that opportunity. I was worried about getting into a stagnant routine.

So you would recommend this internship to other people?

Yeah! I think it's great. Murmur is a great place, everybody is super kind and passionate about what they do. They're passionate about sharing their knowledge with other people, especially students and people coming up. Our office is very open, as far as seating arrangement goes. I was talking to a developer about coding this morning. You can just turn around and ask something and someone will answer your question.

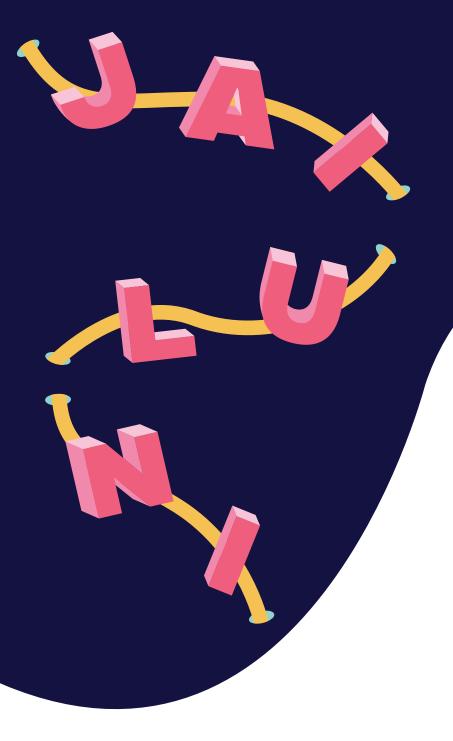
What advice would you give someone who's looking for an internship?

I think people get so caught-up in their egos. It's not their fault, we have people come to Show & Tell and to PSU when you're in portfolio and you meet all these cool people doing these cool

things and you get hung up thinking, "I wanna be here, I wanna do this, I wanna project myself as this person." I think people forget that those people worked fairly hard to get to where they are. They had a journey to get to where they are. They didn't wake up one morning working at the coolest agency. Jessica Walsh didn't open her agency in one day.

So don't be too picky?

Don't be too picky! Throw caution to the wind. You never know what you might get out of any situation. I think people wanting to be at the coolest, hottest agencies. That's where you're shooting yourself in the foot. Everybody's applying there. No offense, but as somebody that's coming out of school, you could have killer work, but the likelihood that you're going to be 'the one,' it's very unlikely. I know who got hired at Instrument over me and it's because they have more specific experience in this one thing. That makes total sense. I would hire them as well. It's a lot more desirable from a hiring perspective to see someone who shows that they're willing to put in the work at a place that maybe they didn't love but they put in the work for six months or maybe a year. Opportunities grow from opportunities, you don't know who you'll meet at these places. Everybody is connected in the creative world here in Portland. Go to those networking events. Shake hands. Say hello. Meet people. Not only to get internships but to be interested in your community as well. It definitely shows and it definitely helps. Don't put so much pressure on yourself. That's when you end up spiraling and getting negative when shit doesn't come your way. For me, work is work and my life is my life. My life is definitely creative and sometimes ebbs and flows into work but when I get rejected from things? Yeah it sucks but then I'm like, 'Ok what are wo doing next?' Don't get so hung up on it!



Shea- What is your involvement with the internship program at Evolve?

Jai Lu- I would say because we're such a small company it's kind of a shared responsibility. Lately, I've been a mentor to our UX interns. Part of that process as well is looking at portfolios and participating in interviews along with our design director or another designer.

How is your internship program structured?

We have one every semester. We have a really tight process with the University of Cincinnati. They actually have a co-op system where they have a list that every student has access to and they choose the companies they want to apply to and the faculty will send us all of the portfolios at once. It's great for us because then we can dedicate one chunk of time to looking at all of these portfolios versus getting all of these portfolios here and there and having to look through them. So, Spring, Summer, Winter we'll have one ID or one UX/ Graphic Design intern individually.

Are they paid? Yes. What do you look for in an intern?

We definitely focus on process. We are more interested in understanding how you think and how you approach design vs really beautiful, flashy projects. For us it's not necessarily about if you designed a really great app, we're not looking to buy your idea. We want to be able to have you on our team to contribute to all of the programs that we're doing and they may not be apps. We're more interested in people who are really articulate about their work and about their process. We're looking for potential. So, even if you don't have really spot on technical skills, I feel like that's something you can be taught. But we can't necessarily teach you how to think. So, it's kinda like that hard skills vs. soft skills thing. And then, definitely positive attitude within the studio we're more generalists. because of that we're looking for people who come in and even if they aren't an expert in whatever that project is. They are willing to learn and are excited to jump into whatever's going on at the studio.

DONT PUT TOO MUCH PRESSURE ON YOURSELF

Trudy was an intern there. What stood out about her?

Definitely attitude. Absolutely attitude. She always had a smile on her face, she never complained about a problem that she had or if she was working through something. That energy was really good because we are a small studio and we feed off each-other's energies.

What kind of projects do you have interns working on throughout their internship?

We treat interns just like any other designer in our studio. Some internships that I've done in the past give you a personal project for your time there. We don't do that. You're on real projects the whole time and we definitely work with our interns to understand if there are spaces they want to learn more about. Maybe they're not an expert in service design, for example, like I wasn't. So, if that's something they're interested in learning more about or being part of, we'll do our best to put them on those tracks and make sure they're getting the most out of their experience with us that they can't get in school necessarily.



For me, it comes from a place of "I've been there," you know? Not so long ago, too. My internship was probably three years ago now. Evolve was my last internship before I graduated. It went really well, obviously. I think having been a student that long ago, it's fresh in my mind and I think it's easy for me to think "I wish I had learned this while I was in school," or "I could've had more guidance here," so I really appreciate the opportunity to help students get what they're not getting out of school and be a coach and share what I've learned through my experiences in school and out of school. I think at the same time having interns helps us stay sharp. They're definitely exposed to a different world. It helps to bring in a fresh perspective and it's just fun having new people in the office and showing them around. It reminds you of all of the little things you might overlook on a day to day basis.

What was your transition from intern to a fulltime position like?

It was pretty easy. I would say responsibility-wise, nothing changed. I had a semester in between and then I came back out and it was like picking up where I left off.

What did you like/dislike about your studios internship program?

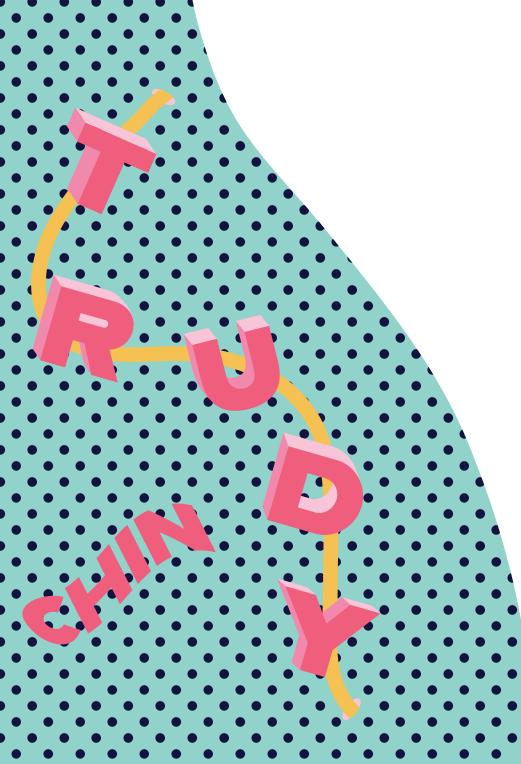
Right now we have three interns. One that's UX focused, one that's graphic design focused, and one from the ID program at UC. I think they're all having a good time but compared to my internship where I was the only intern, I feel like they're not getting a breadth of exposure to projects. When I was an intern, even though I studied industrial design, I was on service design programs because we stretch-to-fit what we need. I feel like right now with three interns we've put them on projects where their strengths will shine but that means that they're also not getting the chance to stretch and try different things. I would love to keep it to one or two interns so that they get a chance to be on different teams,

work with different people in our studio, and also be on projects that they might not know anything about.

Do you have any advice for anyone looking for internships?

Lots of advice. Don't put too much pressure on yourself. When I was in school I felt like people were always trying to get "the good co-op" or "the good internship" but I feel like there's something you can learn from every experience if you approach it with a student mindset. Always try to see the positive. Doing an internship is as much for you to interview that company, to see if that's the right company for you. It's not just trying to impress this company. From my experience, each co-op that I was on helped me see, "ok, that's not really what I want to do," "I don't want to work for a big corporation." Eventually that leads you to the right fit. In terms of portfolio process, be true to what your story is. There's always something to be said about knowing who your audience will be and crafting a portfolio for them. Don't forget why you love design and which projects you're most excited about because those are the ones that you should be talking about.





Whitney- Let's start by saying your full name and where you had an internship.

Trudy- My name is Trudy Chin and I had an internship at Evolve Collaborative.

Who hired you?

Their Founder, Christian Freissler. I used to Nanny for him and his daughter Nina, so I knew his previously. Then he told me they were looking for someone to come in as a studio assistant. I think they were becoming a bigger company and so they needed another person in there just to help out in the studio. He asked me if I had any classmates looking for a job and to tell them to come in. I said, "I'm looking for a job!" We just kind of chatted about that for a while and then he invited me into the studio. We met with Dawn Murakami, their Studio Manager, and sat down to chat. They really just needed someone in, so I started to help them out. The first part I was doing more Studio Assistant tasks and then after that it turned into more of an internship where I did a bit more design work.

So it wasn't really previously an internship program that you were involved in?

No, they do have a really great internship program and I know people who have done it. This wasn't the same that I did, but it turned into me as an intern where I did some of the same projects that they would do.

Previous to you happening to fall into this position, were you actively applying for internships? Was that something you were seeking out doing?

I was looking into internships, but I wasn't necessarily applying. I knew that I wanted to do something before my senior year over the summer and during the spring term of last year. I was only taking one class because I had other things going on. It just kind of lined up to be the perfect timing.

Okay, cool. What was the interview process like?

I went in, we sat down, and went through the things that they would need. It wasn't a big interview process because they needed someone quickly. We talked about the culture of the studio and the kind of day to day activities I would be doing. They wanted to know if I would be comfortable using my car, because I would have several errands I would need to run during the day. We also discussed my availability and previous work that I had done.

Did you bring your portfolio with you to the interview?

No, but they had seen my work before and knew I was a designer that was in school for design.

Starting out what were your duties for the position?

I was more of a studio assistant helping out with expense reports and running errands that anyone would need in the office. This included getting office groceries or running to FedEx to get something printed. Later on I would get put onto smaller design projects. Someone would

have something they were working on and there would be one small detail that they might not have time for or they wanted to give me something more design related to do. I started working on smaller projects like that until I got closer with one of the design directors, Rachel Nyeholt. She would give me a little tasks during the week.

It sounds like you "evolved" from being taken on as a studio assistant into an intern.

Yes, I still continued to do expense reports throughout my time there, but then I was given more projects to work on. In the summer I had a project where I worked on their employee handbook. They needed a revival of that and more content. So, I was working on the creativity and design of that.

What were your favorite aspects of your time at Evolve?

I love the culture there. Everyone there was so nice and I think that's really important when you are an intern or someone new in a space. Everyone was really welcoming, very friendly, and very open to having a new person there. The first week that I was there we took an office surf trip. We went to the beach for a day and just hung out. It was super fun and a great introduction to who they are as a company. Later found out that they hang out with each other on the weekends, they party together, and they invited me to everything. It was a very comfortable environment.





Do you still talk to people who work there?

Yeah. It was really great to see Jai Lu, who it was great to see speak at PSU today for Show and Tell.. At Evolve they do a mix of Graphic, Industrial, and UX design. I never worked directly with her because she does Industrial Design and I worked more closely with the Graphic Designers.

Was there anything that you felt was missing from your experience?

I think because it wasn't a direct internship program there was a blank space there, but I really enjoyed working part-time there.

You said that they do have an internship program, were you working very closely with any of their interns?

Yes, I sat next to one of the interns. We worked on a project together which was really fun to do. It was a project devoted specifically to us which was really nice and it was fun to work with someone else who was also "the new kid" at the studio.

Was that person a design student or had graduated from a design school?

He was a junior in a design program at the University of Cincinnati.

That's interesting that he came all the way out here for an internship.

They have actually had multiple people from that program. Jai Lu had been one of them who did the internship program. There are also two or three other people who came from that school as well.

They must have some kind of connection.

Yeah, I'm not sure what it is.

What is any advice you would give someone who is looking for an internship?

I think be really nice, meet new people, and keep connections that you have made. If someone says, "hey, maybe we should work together sometime" keep that in mind and don't just let them disappear from your life. Keep up with them and maintain a relationship with them.

Did that happen for you when you were at Evolve? Did anyone say, "Hey, I would love to work with you in the future?

Yeah. When I left they all wrote a card and everyone said, "good luck at school, will miss you, it was so fun having you here." All Christian wrote was "Come back!"

So, one could say you have a job waiting for you basically? haha Supposably, yes. haha Would you do another internship? Do you have plans to do another one before you graduate?

I don't have plans at the moment. I don't graduate until spring and I'm allowing myself to have this time locked in school and really focus on that. I think it internships are a really great way to get a feel for the field of design and learn a little bit more about agency culture. See what kind of agency you want to work in. That's a great way to get your foot in the door.

Through your experience you did see that that's something that you wanted? Yeah, definitely.

Great, well thank you for taking the time to talk to me.

Of course.