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An Unconventional Start

It's easy to give advice once you've already gotten where you want to be. But I wanted to offer up a sort of testimonial to the fact that a large part of taking on a semester with The Washington Center, gaining an internship, or striving to achieve anything in life is being ready for the unexpected. Even that means dealing with a difficult roommate in a foreign country while trying maintain a Skype interview.

So, this past summer I spent 2.5 months volunteering in Transylvania, Romania. It was an eye-opening experience as I met people from all over the world, and I learned a lot about the unique dynamic of Eastern Europe. When I have chosen to travel, I noticed there were certain factors out of my control like language, time, and people.



Transylvania, Romania

This was no different in Romania. Specifically I had to be mindful of the 7-hour time difference between Transylvania and Washington, D.C. I found I had to do some time management acrobatics to make sure everything moved along smoothly, especially when it came time for final interviews with internship sites in D.C.

I completed a practice interview with my TWC internship advisor successfully, but on the day of my interview with my internship site, I faced quite an unprofessional moment.

Like I said previously another uncontrollable aspect of travel are the people you encounter. In the case of my volunteer trip, I couldn't control the people I had to room with. As things often go, some people like what you do and some people don't.

The interview began and I stationed myself at a table that was near a long enough extension cord. The chatter in the room was loud enough to drown out the interviewer. A simple request like a slight volume adjustment could set someone off, and that is what happened to me. I explained that I was having an interview with a possible employer but that did little to calm things. Long story short, my employer essentially watched me attempt to diffuse a conflict.

It was embarrassing, and it definitely wasn't my most graceful moment. But that is the way of life. I did my best with the unexpected. Nonetheless, the individual that I interviewed with, hired me for my current internship anyway. So my advice to you, reader, is not to shy away from the unconventional. I did my best and really that is all that can be asked of any of us.

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