AMERICAN SONGWRITER MAGAZINE INTERNSHIP:

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY FOR THE PROBASCO SCHOLARSHIP

American Songwriter Magazine is an internationally distributed magazine that focuses on the art of crafting music and lyrics. While a semi-major publication, the magazine is run by a very small staff; during the school year and the summer, interns perform most of the everyday office tasks. I left Nashville at the end of the summer with an incredible new knowledge about journalism, both of how the business operates and the style of writing that creates it.

American Songwriter interns had total responsibility for all regular office tasks. We answered the phones and sent and received emails. When doing this, we had to be ready to deal with any questions the caller might have. Frequently it was a reader asking about subscriptions or deals and we needed to be able to quickly pull up their information on the computer and answer any question they had. We handled all subscriptions, so we could talk to the caller about his and know if it was paid or being shipped or when it expired. Other times, the calls were one of our advertisers or a musician or representative of a musician, and we directed their call to an editor or answered any questions they had about issues and features.

Through marketing projects that we worked on in groups, I talked with other magazines and websites, compiling advertising specs and comparing prices; I had to formally present this information to the magazine’s owner, so that he could possibly purchase advertisements for our lyric contest. Through this project, I was also able to help design online ads, which are now running on the magazine’s site (www.americansongwriter.com).

The most important thing I brought out of my internship is a much bigger portfolio and an improved knowledge of journalistic writing. Each day, our online editor emailed all the interns with a list of “time sensitive” news stories and a list of “whenever” stories. The “time sensitive” pieces had to be written and put online by 11 that morning. To be able to write well-written articles very quickly took practice, but is a much-needed skill that I am so thankful I now have. We were also allowed to find our own music news and pitch it; many of the articles I wrote were about news I found on www.billboard.com or www.pitchfork.com. By the end, I published thirteen articles to American Songwriter’s website, and I left with an offer to continue writing online articles whenever I wish.