The World Affairs Council of Atlanta

This summer I completed an internship with the World Affairs Council of Atlanta, which is a non-profit, non-partisan organization affiliated with the J. Mack Robinson School of Business at Georgia State University. At the Council, I worked mainly under Dr. Christopher Brown, a political science professor (focusing on political economy and developing regions) at GSU, the Vice President for Research and Analysis at the World Affairs Council of Atlanta, and a former professor at and a graduate of Sewanee.

It was an exciting time to be an intern at the World Affairs Council of Atlanta; this summer marked the official founding of the organization, the selection of the initial Board of Directors, and the first convergence of the Council as an organization. The Council’s stated mission is “to provide a forum for dialogue, a source of expertise, and an engine for research on international affairs and global issues that impact the corporate community, governmental and non-governmental organizations, and the general public.”

The World Affairs Council of Atlanta has several main programs and projects, including the Young Leaders Program, the Global Strategic Leadership Forum, the Business Roundtable Series, and the Robinson Country Risk Index. While at the World Affairs Council of Atlanta, I worked primarily on two projects: the Business Roundtable Series and the Robinson Country Risk Index, but I also assisted with other projects essential to the Council’s work.

This summer, I was involved in researching for the Business Roundtable Series, which in this case involved the future of economic and societal development in South Africa after the World Cup. The event was entitled “The World Cup is Over... Now What?”, and it was held in the Corporate Coca-Cola Headquarters. My job as a Council intern was to do background research and prepare a literature and article review for the roundtable participants. At the event itself, I escorted the corporate roundtable attendees to the correct conference room, helped with registration, and attended the briefing.
My other primary project at the World Affairs Council of Atlanta generally involved working with the Robinson Country Risk Index (RCRI), which is a tool that measures business risk across 123 major world economies. Instead of using only economical factors to determine risk, the RCRI recognizes the importance of risks not traditionally associated with opening a business abroad. For this reason, the RCRI includes 256 different variables across four themes—Governance, Economics, Operations, and Society—in order to provide a more comprehensive measurement of business risk across major world economies.

I worked mainly in the Societal and Operational sections, so I pulled data from many sources, including the World Health Organization, UNICEF and other United Nations organizations, the Environmental Performance Index, the World Economic Forum’s Global Gender Gap Report, Global Enabling Trade Report, and Global Competitiveness Report, as well as International Telecommunications Union statistics.

Overall, I had a fantastic time working at the World Affairs Council of Atlanta. I learned not only a great deal about the start-up of a non-profit, but also a lot about business, international development, connected capitalism, and the multiple types of business risk as seen in the Robinson Country Risk Index. I thank the Tonya Public Affairs Internship Endowed Fund for the opportunity to complete this summer internship. It was a wonderful experience, and working for the World Affairs Council of Atlanta helped me further define goals for my future educational and career plans.