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We Tried It: Super Bowl Internship

Four University of Minnesota, Morris students got the opportunity of a lifetime this month: interning with KARE11 to handle Super Bowl LII coverage in Minneapolis. UMN Morris Communications and Marketing staffers Sarah Freske '18, Starbuck, and Hailey LaMont '19, Hot Springs, South Dakota, share their experiences.

Sarah Freske '18

Major: English

Week 1

While the other interns prepared for the week leading up to the Super Bowl, I spent the first week of my internship on my sister's couch, knocked out by influenza. I returned Thursday to help set up KARE11's temporary office space at the IDS Center before beginning work at the Mall of America, where I met the crew who would produce the KARE11 Sunrise and 11 a.m. shows. I would spend my remaining time assisting with these shows, and the other interns would work at the KARE11 Warming House on Nicollet Mall, where the evening shows would be hosted. The real action would begin the next week as Minneapolis and KARE11 braced for the Super Bowl.

Week 2

As often as I have claimed to be a morning person, the first morning of waking up at 2:30 a.m. caused me to seriously reconsider that claim. I arrived at the Mall of America nervous to be separated from the other interns, but eager to experience a kind of work with which I was completely unfamiliar. At KARE11's set overlooking Nickelodeon Universe, I managed the studio audience for the Sunrise show, escorting them through security and handing out swag. The initial audience was small and polite, but by 11 a.m. the mall had opened to the public, and crowd control quickly became a necessity. Throughout the week audiences grew larger and larger, attracting mall walkers, hecklers, and the occasional KARE11 superfan.

Timing was crucial, particularly during the busier hours of the day. I knew the schedule of segments and guests during each show to ensure that the audience had the gifts or props that corresponded to a specific guest's segment. Additionally, I let the guests know when to be on set for their interview. This task was particularly nerve-racking, as the producer on set was generally busy during the shows, and I was terrified of leading the wrong guest onto the set at the wrong time. I managed to avoid causing any on-air confusion, however, and my only mishap was being scolded by Chuck Foreman for leading him the wrong way through the mall.

Friday brought an emotional goodbye. By the end of the week I had grown comfortable with my role and with helping out on set in any capacity I could. The producer, anchors, and others on set were incredibly receptive to my questions, and I learned a great deal about television news production and event management. I left the mall on my last day feeling bettered by the experiences and connections that I had made during my stay with KARE11.

What I Learned

By the end of the internship I had perspective on a side of television I had never considered. The Super Bowl is as much of a media event as it is a sporting event, as evidenced by the hundreds of radio and television personalities that established sites on Radio Row in the Mall of America. Media plays an enormous role in delivering a certain experience to people watching the Super Bowl and participating in the related events. Being involved in this behind-the-scenes work was fascinating, and it was equally exciting to be able to work with media to help deliver that experience.

Hailey LaMont '19

Major: Communication, Media, and Rhetoric and Studio Art

Week 1

We spent the time before the events started at the Mall of America and the Warming House at Super Bowl Live preparing for what was sure to be a hectic 10 days. We tried to be as organized as possible, since things tend to change quickly when broadcasting a live show. During this time we [interns] helped load, unload, and set everything up at KARE11's temporary office space near the Warming House. Some of the other interns were responsible for creating binders and packets to have at each location and to give to volunteers. While they were finishing these up Wednesday night, I was able to expand some of the skills that I gained working for the [UMN Morris] Office of Communications and Marketing by calling local vendors and negotiating prices and timelines to print these projects. This was another long day, but at the end of it, I was able to say that I had found a vendor who was able to print our project.

The final day before the event began was spent setting up the Warming House and the studio space. We were all helping out wherever we could, and I ended up running several errands downtown—and getting lost in the skyways! After everything had been set up at the Warming House, KARE11 did some promo shoots to be used during the event, letting people know what they could find if they came down to our studio. I met some more of the talent as well as the people who put the videos together, and it was exciting to watch the promo on air knowing that I saw everything that went into getting it ready.

Week 2

I was able to watch all of our evening shows broadcast live. I met some of the guests who were on the show and got to know the anchors, producers, and tech people very well. The Warming

House had three main attractions—the penny press (with Super Bowl and Olympic stamps), a photo mosaic wall, and the studio. We helped people inside to warm up from the frigid Minnesota winter and encouraged them to participate in our activities. I had a lot of interaction with the public and had lovely conversations with both locals and individuals who had traveled far to visit the Super Bowl. One such person was very interesting, as she had come from Indiana to watch the game, but was so excited to be in the KARE11 Warming House. She told me she watched KARE11 online every day, even though a lot of the stories are about local news and do not pertain to her. I heard several testimonials along those lines, from people who loved KARE and everyone involved, and it was great to pass those messages along.

What I Learned

Working for KARE11 was a fantastic experience. I learned not only a lot about a television studio and live broadcasts, but also about myself. Going into this internship I was a little wary. I'm a ranch girl from a very small town and have not had much experience in a big city. I was worried about all sorts of things, like the noise, driving, and the people. Having those worries and being conscious of them going into the internship was good. Without them, I would have been overwhelmed. However, I realized I loved working in the city and interacting with thousands of people each day. I stepped outside of my comfort zone, and it paid off.

This activity was supported by a [Career Ready Internship Grant from Great Lakes Higher Education Guaranty Corporation](#). This grant is enabling Morris to create an unprecedented number of new campus-affiliated paid internship opportunities throughout the surrounding community.

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Pictured above: KARE11 interns, left to right: Hailey Lamont '19, Andrea Wathanaphone '18, Sarah Freske '18, and Justin Hawley '19.