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Historic ad agency welcomes 5 WKU interns

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MaKenzie Bradley (from left), Isaac Teske, Kaity Weitlauf, Jack Quinn and Camaren Pursley began work this summer at Doe-Anderson Inc., which was founded in Louisville in 1915.

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Louisville-based advertising agency Doe-Anderson Inc., one of the oldest firms in the country, welcomed five Western Kentucky University students this summer for an internship described as a “resume spotlight.”

It marks the first round of internships stemming from the agency’s partnership with Imagewest, a student-run advertising and public relations agency at WKU.

David Vawter, Imagewest co-director and executive vice chairman at Doe-Anderson, has been with the firm for 13 years. Most of his time was spent as the chief creative officer.



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“Many, many years ago, I could not get a job at Doe-Anderson today with the portfolio I had coming out of college. There was no place for me to learn this stuff,” Vawter said. “These (interns) are at a huge advantage over people 20, 30 years ago because they’re learning how the business actually works.”

The five interns include Kaity Weitlauf, strategy; Isaac Teske, art direction; Jack Quinn, copywriting; MaKenzie Bradley, media; and Camaren Pursley, project managing and client partnership.

Weitlauf, Teske, Quinn and Bradley all graduated this past May, while Pursley will return to WKU for one last semester.

Pursley, who expects to graduate this December, began working at Imagewest after transferring to WKU in 2021. She often works as a liaison between the student-run agency and its clients.

Despite her intern status, she has taken on more of a leadership role for her team at Doe-Anderson. She is charged with overseeing presentations to clients and organizing the work of designers and strategists.

“In advertising, it’s really important to have a network and to be able to talk to people,” Pursely said. “This internship has really helped me broaden my horizons and network with people.”

Bradley studied advertising with a minor and worked with Imagewest her senior year. She said the guidance she’d received at Doe-Anderson has been crucial in helping her find her professional niche.

“They give us a lot of trust, and it is so amazing how trusting they are,” Bradley said. “Everybody here is so engaged to help you learn ... Nobody is ever too busy to answer a question or talk to you about your job.”

Weitlauf did not participate in Imagewest, but worked with Bowling Green media content studio Vid Monster while in college. Vawter was a professor in one of her classes and reached out to her when the internship opened up.

Her role often includes conducting and analyzing market research in order to better connect with the needs of clients – essentially designing “campaign routes” to achieve a given goal. She has primarily worked with the Louisville Zoo to market summer events, such as Wild Lights.

Weitlauf said while her position at Vid Monster gave her real-world experience, she wished more students took advantage of Imagewest’s resources.



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“It’s a great way to get involved and have opportunities, and not just for people in advertising or graphic design,” Weitlauf said.

Quinn studied journalism and worked at Imagewest during his junior year. He and Teske have also worked alongside each other for the Louisville Zoo.

Learning to write copy has been an adjustment, but Quinn said the guidance he’d received through Imagewest and his colleagues at Doe-Anderson has been crucial to developing his skills.

“If I didn’t do Imagewest, even if they weren’t partnered with Doe-Anderson, I would have absolutely no idea what I was doing with this internship,” Quinn said.

Vawter’s colleagues at the agency now tell him the interns have been doing “a terrific job.”

Vawter began at Imagewest a year ago, commuting from Louisville to WKU while serving on the board at Doe-Anderson. As he got further into Imagewest, knowing he’d soon transition away from Doe-Anderson, he sought to “intertwine our two companies more deeply.”

“A couple of us figured that if we could institutionalize this, we’d have a steady stream of people who are really much further ahead of the game than a typical college student,” Vawter said. “They’ve been in this environment, learning how to work in this field.”

Kristina Arnold, head of WKU's Department of Art, said the internship is evidence of the kind of evolving opportunities Imagewest has created for graduates for 35 years.

"Imagewest isn't new, and Doe-Anderson isn't new, but the partnership is," Arnold said. "I feel like that's a really exciting new chapter for both of our agencies."

While Bowling Green is home to many of its own marketing agencies, Arnold said Doe-Anderson provides opportunities that are hard to come by in a smaller market. The age and reputation of the firm also help strengthen a resume.

In addition, Arnold said Doe-Anderson is large enough to give interns what they need, but not too large to lose them in the crowd. Each intern is given a mentor in a similar position to help them over the 10-week program.

"They're established, but they're still working with the interns on a personal level," Arnold said. "We try not to be mother hens, but we want to send (interns) someplace where we know they'll be taken care of."

Arnold said while any department aims to prepare students for the "real world" in their career, there is an inevitable gap between academic and professional experience. Programs like Imagewest help bridge that gap.

“I think some of those seeds that students plant now, both with the experience they’re learning and with the people they’re meeting, could sprout tomorrow,” Arnold said.

“We’re dumping them on their heads a little bit, like ‘hello, here’s the real world,’ but this kind of internship gives them a good stepping stone so they feel a little bit less like they’re being dropped into the deep end of a pool.”

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