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Eric Young - BCBST, Public Portal

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Summer Semester

At the start of this internship rotation, I had several goals I wanted to achieve. I was hoping to get more hands-on experience with software development and learn more about how teams work in a professional setting. Working under Cristina Resse on the Public/Consumer Portals team ended up being quite different from what I expected, but I still learned some valuable things along the way.

During this rotation, I was able to participate in daily stand-up meetings, sprint planning sessions, and retrospectives. These meetings provided invaluable insight into how professional development teams coordinate their efforts, manage workloads, and adapt to changing requirements. I observed how team members communicated progress, identified blockers, and collaborated to solve complex problems. The structured nature of these interactions was quite different from my previous internship experience, where communication was more informal and sporadic.

One thing that stood out to me right away was how structured this team was compared to my last internship. They actually followed scrum methodology pretty closely, which was refreshing after being on a team that didn't really have much process at all. I got to sit in on daily stand-ups, sprint planning meetings, and retrospectives, which gave me a good sense of how these things are supposed to work in practice.

The daily stand-ups were pretty straightforward - everyone would talk about what they did yesterday, what they're planning to do today, and if they had any

blockers. It was interesting to see how the team communicated and how they handled issues that came up. The sprint planning sessions were more involved, with the team breaking down user stories and estimating how long things would take.

I found the retrospective meetings particularly useful. The team would talk about what went well during the sprint and what could be improved. It was cool to see how they actually implemented changes based on these discussions. This was completely different from my previous internship where there wasn't really any structured reflection or improvement process.

Through my participation in these meetings, I gained a much clearer understanding of the roles and responsibilities within a development team. I observed how the Scrum Master facilitated discussions and removed impediments, how Product Owners prioritized features based on business value, and how developers collaborated to deliver high-quality software. This exposure helped me appreciate the complexity of managing software projects and the importance of clear communication and defined processes.

Since I didn't have much actual work to do, I spent a lot of time observing how the more senior people on the team operated. I got to see what Cristina and other senior developers actually do beyond just writing code. There's a lot more mentoring, decision-making, and communication with other teams than I realized.

I observed how senior team members mentored junior developers, made architectural decisions, and balanced technical considerations with business

requirements. These observations helped me understand the career progression path for software engineers and the skills I'll need to develop as I advance in my career. I saw how technical leaders facilitate knowledge sharing, conduct code reviews, and ensure that projects align with organizational standards and best practices.

The experience also highlighted the importance of soft skills in senior technical roles. I noticed how effective communication, problem-solving abilities, and the capacity to explain complex technical concepts to non-technical stakeholders were just as important as technical expertise. This realization has influenced my understanding of what it means to be a well-rounded software professional.

Although I didn't receive traditional project assignments during this rotation, I gained significant exposure to Blue Cross Blue Shield of Tennessee's technology stack and development practices. This knowledge has given me a broader perspective on enterprise software development and the tools and technologies used in large-scale applications.

I learned about the various frameworks, databases, and development tools that the organization uses to build and maintain their consumer-facing applications. Understanding this tech stack has provided me with valuable context about how different technologies work together in a production environment. I was

able to see how the team manages multiple environments, handles deployments, and maintains code quality through various testing and review processes.

This exposure to enterprise-level technology decisions has helped me understand the considerations that go into selecting appropriate tools and frameworks for large-scale applications. I gained insight into factors such as scalability, maintainability, security, and performance that influence technology choices in a corporate environment.

While this rotation didn't provide traditional hands-on coding experience, it offered a different but equally valuable type of learning. The absence of specific project work initially concerned me, as I had hoped to apply my technical skills to real-world problems. However, I came to realize that understanding how software teams function and learning about enterprise development practices are crucial components of professional development that are often overlooked in academic settings.

The opportunity to observe and participate in a well-structured agile environment has given me a much clearer picture of what to expect in my future career. I now have a better understanding of how theoretical concepts from my coursework apply in practice and how successful teams implement these methodologies to deliver value consistently.

This experience has also helped me identify areas where I want to focus my continued learning. Seeing the importance of communication skills, understanding

of business requirements, and leadership capabilities has motivated me to develop these aspects alongside my technical abilities.

Moving into future rotations, I feel better prepared to contribute meaningfully to development teams. The insights I've gained about team dynamics, agile practices, and enterprise development will help me integrate more effectively into new environments and understand my role within larger organizational contexts.

I'm eager to apply what I've learned about scrum and agile methodologies in a hands-on capacity. Having observed these practices in action, I now have a clearer understanding of how to participate effectively in sprint planning, daily stand-ups, and retrospectives. This knowledge will allow me to be a more engaged and valuable team member in future assignments.

While I would have appreciated more opportunities for direct technical contribution during this rotation, I recognize that the professional development and industry knowledge I gained are invaluable assets that will serve me well throughout my career. The experience has broadened my perspective on what it means to be a software professional and has given me a more comprehensive understanding of the field I'm entering.

I'm optimistic that future rotation will provide opportunities to combine this newfound understanding of team dynamics and enterprise practices with hands-on technical work, creating a more complete and enriching internship experience.