I returned from studying economic development in China with the ability to transition some of my accumulated knowledge to a project that would change my life forever. I was given the opportunity to work with Carefree Health & Weight Solutions, a company that has an immense impact on the well-being of the surrounding communities by guiding healthy lifestyles. Carefree Health & Weight Solutions is a weight management office located originally in Memphis, TN but is currently expanding its offices to surrounding states, including Atlanta, GA where I was stationed this summer for my internship. The private owned office is a cash pay facility that offers services such as maternal-child, med-surg., research, sexual transmitted disease treatments, staff development, pediatric nursing, healthcare administration, women’s health, minor medical issues, congestive heart failure issues, retail, and healthcare.

The first half of my time with the company I was expected to learn the existing brand in order to solidify a building block for ideas to enhance the brand. Carefree’s main goal is to empower their patients and offer healthcare that is affordable and convenient when one can not visit their primary care doctor. Their biggest strength is the unrushed speedy service. The speed of the visit strictly depends on the available time for the patient.

One of my goals entering this project was pinpointing a method to create value for the patients through the brand. After ample research, I concluded that patients are most appreciative when they are able to visit a doctor’s office at any time of the day without an appointment. Most of the patients that visit the office are those who have busy work schedules, most with corporate jobs. I found that these individuals have the most unhealthy diets due to short break periods and working late into the night. I spent two weeks at the Memphis location observing and working hands on with patients. I learned that 85% of the patients visited the
office during their lunch break which only lasted at most, one hour. These patients appreciated the speedy service that Carefree offered whether it was for weight management or sickly visits.

For the second half of my intern period I held the responsibility for territory management, which included discovering and analyzing areas that proved best fit for the placement of an office. For about three weeks, for half of the day, I scouted territories. The areas targeted were those with high obesity rates and high volumes of fast food restaurants--most of this data was found via research online. I soon discovered that in most of the areas where there were fast food restaurants clustered together, there was a GNC Vitamin shoppe in the middle of the shopping area. This sparked the idea to use the GNC locations as a carbon copy for ideal Carefree Health locations. My theory behind this idea derives from the assumption that people that are willing to purchase supplements, vitamins, and weight loss products would be even more willing to see a professional doctor about these issues at a lower price than most of the GNC products. Carefree’s service list prices are below the average price for a vitapack sold at GNC. GNC also does not offer the education needed for proper weight loss. The salesman in the GNC stores usually points out what products one should buy. Also, nine times out of ten, GNC salesmen attempt to upsell clients by offering package deals. The lack of shared knowledge for proper weight loss concludes in clients using products as a sole dependent for weight loss which will not produce expected results. My research portrayed GNC as a new competitor for Carefree Health & Weight Solutions.

Another task I was given required me to design a website template for the company. The task was given to me spontaneously after a mishap occurred with the contracted website designer. This was definitely my favorite task of the summer for the company. I have about a
year and a half of experience in website designing, so when I witnessed the business deal fall through I was able to step up to the plate and offer my skills. When I realized that I was designing a site template that would be seen by thousands of people I caught chills. Having my name on the bottom of the professional site is a monstrous deal for me.

The last week of the internship I was included in the evaluation of the business budget and company accounts. I was able to shadow the accountant as he analyzed the recent expenditures and planned expenditures. I realized that it is vital to draft a business budget if you are starting a business or expanding a business even if you have the funds, because adversity can happen at any moment. Financiers and bankers are more inclined to give loans when they see a drafted budget. Budgets also are important because they help prune risks for the business/owner. I was given a lesson on how to draft a budget and the essential elements to include in the draft. Afterwards, I was tested on my accumulated knowledge. My test included listing the elements that should be presented in a business budget and creating a mock budget for a new company that presented a twelve month span. A few of the critical elements were start-up costs, necessary income to support the company, realistic forecast of revenues, and cost of operating (i.e. fixed costs & variable costs).

The amount of innovation I was allowed to contribute was limitless. This internship allowed me to use my creativeness to help re-mold a brand that has immense possibilities to spread nationwide and change the lives of millions. I stayed up several nights laying in bed thinking about how I could offer more to the company. The responsibilities that were given to me fostered my knowledge of how a business takes the first steps to expanding. Though most of the work was quite challenging, I am positive that it will make the road ahead of me much easier.
I am beyond grateful for the funding that was allotted to me; it gave me the opportunity to gain experience that will better my future. Not only has this internship upgraded my resume, it has given me an advantage over peer competition. I will take the experience I have gained through working with Carefree Health & Weight Solutions and use it to foster my future endeavors in business.