

As a Bottomline Access Intern, I work with Boston Public School students to get them excited and more informed about the college process! My tasks included Outreach, Data Intake, and projects that I pitched interest for or that were assigned to me by my supervisor.

Bottomline seeks to tackle the low % of BPS students attending and completing college. Their vision is: “to transform urban communities by producing thousands of career-ready college graduates who are breaking the cycle of poverty.” In short: “Get in. Graduate. Go far.”

I began my internship with doing a lot of data intake on Salesforce. I soon transitioned to my favorite part of this work— talking to students! While doing student outreach over phone, text, and having Engagement Calls with students, I got to share my experiences and learn from them.

One of my projects was assisting students with fly-in applications for different colleges. The week of July 12th has to be the most memorable because I had about 20 hours of Microsoft Team Meetings with students, sometimes 4 hours back to back. The other intern and I co-created virtual essay workshops. While I continued to think about what I wanted to do my final project on, I had more engagement calls with students and organized virtual Questbridge Info Sessions.

Working with Bottomline, an organization where so much of their legitimacy and excellent service comes from meeting in person with students, our main tools in the Access team were all different communication platforms. In my ten weeks at Bottomline, we shifted from using GoToMeeting, Slack, and Zoom to Microsoft Teams. This virtual age has provided us with a silver lining: our work can reach more students and our mission, all just one presentation away.

My main challenge was being in a different timezone. I took it with grace, and in the end, I developed an early morning routine. Limitations were not being able to share as much as my college process with other students, which might have made them more comfortable with me. I anticipate not being able to gauge the comfort of people virtually is a challenge for many.

I cleaned up data for our college updates, kept in contact with students, and reviewed feedback from workshops until the 2nd last week of my internship.

With only a week to solely focus on my project, I wanted to make sure my final project culminated all the communication and organizational skills I continued to develop at Bottomline. I focused on how BL can build sustainable community partnerships. I began by asking reflective questions about the inequity in information distribution that we as an organization perpetuate.

My project work matters, because as the next recruitment season approaches, it may be helpful for the Bottomline Access team to reassess where they have the most impact and where there is room for growth. If Bottomline’s mission is to be fulfilled, the emphasis some of their stakeholders place on meritocracy must be revisited. Existing partnerships and future ones can be reinforced by following the Efficiency, Legitimacy, and Sustainability model I recommend.

I’d want future interns to learn from and develop the virtual presentations created or co-created by my fellow intern and me. While in the future, we hope we may return to working in person, I hope Bottomline takes advantage of this virtual platform opportunity to reach more students and sees the benefit of continuing such virtual presentations even in a “post” quarantine era.