



Morgan's take:

An intern's perspective of the SCC

For our second internship meeting, we had the pleasure

of listening to a panel discussion with **Deb Ellenberg** (chief hearing examiner), **Bobby Tucker** (Public Service Taxation director), **Joe Face** (commissioner of Financial Institutions), and **Shane Ayers** (deputy director of Utility & Railroad Safety). I found it surprising to learn about the complex professional paths of each of these participants leading to their current positions at the State Corporation Commission (SCC) since they are so well-established in their careers, it was hard to imagine that they once worked in entry-level positions. Whether it was the exuberance in their voice talking about their job or their many years with the SCC (a collective 106 years), these division leaders displayed passion for their public service careers.

First to speak was Deb Ellenberg, who told us that when she first arrived in Richmond from the Mid-

west, her real estate agent arranged a lunch meeting with **Russell Cunningham**, the SCC's chief hearing examiner at the time. Deb was hired as an entry-level attorney in the SCC's Office of General Counsel, left to work in private practice, and then returned to the SCC as deputy general counsel. She reiterated the importance of never burning bridges behind you. "I left the Commission in good standing and was able to come back three years later into a position I might not have been able to achieve if I had not left," she said.

Next, Bobby Tucker spoke. After graduating from Virginia Commonwealth University with a business management degree, he was hired at the SCC as a utility appraisal trainee. Bobby emphasized that we should never feel like a job is below us. "Nothing is too menial. Always pitch in and help out. Work hard and things will come your way," he said.

Joe Face had a similar message when he said, "If you're not willing to do the small things well, you won't be

given the opportunity to do the big things." Joe started working at the SCC in 1979, and by 1997, he had gained the position of commissioner of financial institutions. It sounded like his job keeps him on his toes, because he said that he would come into work with an idea of how the day was going to go, just for it to be put on the back burner when another impending issue presented itself that morning.

Shane Ayers spoke last. After working in construction and as a utility locator, he came to the SCC. "I wanted to make a difference, something I could never do in construction. I wanted to pass along to my kids that I was a part of something greater than myself. The SCC gave me that opportunity," he said. He was so committed to that ideal, and the SCC's public safety mission, that upon arrival, he accepted a pay cut. "If you find something you truly love, you'll never work another day

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in your life,” he said.

Similar qualities that Deb, Bobby, Joe, and Shane look for when hiring new employees were echoed throughout the panel, such as communication skills, honesty, dedication and the ability to work well with others. Since everyone mentioned strong writing skills as a quality they look for when hiring, and I'm a technical communication major studying to be a technical writer, I asked how they would describe strong writing. As a group, they agreed that gram-

mar, organization and clarity were skill sets they looked for (something I'll have to keep in mind!). They also emphasized that we should assure that email messages are written with the same care before the “send” button is pushed.

Speaking on behalf of all the interns, we appreciate that Deb, Bobby, Joe, and Shane met with us and we will remember the qualities they look for in new employees when we enter the job market!