This summer I worked at bop.fm, a music tech startup co-founded by M&T alum Shehzad Daredia ('06). The company provides a service that aggregates all other music services (Spotify, YouTube, SoundCloud, etc.) into one. This allows you to play and share any song regardless of which music service you or your friend uses or where on the internet the song is located. I found out about the internship through a career services email from Jamie Davis, one of the M&T program coordinators. After reaching out to Shehzad, we communicated a bit over the phone a few times about my background and interests, and then I was fortunate enough to receive an offer for the summer.

The role I performed in was a nontechnical one. Most of my time was spent in product testing. This usually entailed playing around with the website and iOS app and documenting various bugs that I came across. The company's product relies on an algorithm to find the correct source for a song. Another part of my job was to double check whether this algorithm found the correct match in specific cases like the Top 40 Billboard songs and playlists that we send out to artists. At one point, I was responsible for going through Trey Songz's entire discography to make sure it was correct on our service. Other tasks I was charged with were preparing analytic reports for artists and reaching out to blogs and artist management as growth initiatives. At one point, I created and validated a playlist for the Black Eyed Peas which was posted by them to millions of followers on Facebook.

The internship really helped influence my career path. It was at the perfect intersection of my interests in music and technology. Previous internships I had were at tech startups, but were in fields that I wasn't very interested in. It was exciting to be at a tech company where everyone was passionate about music. It showed me that you can always find opportunities in the areas of your interest. I now know I want to end up in the Media & Entertainment industry, most likely from a technology side. Another useful aspect of my internship experience was that I was able take on a nontechnical role. My previous internships primarily involved me with software development, so this summer I wanted to try something new. Although the nature of the work took a while to get used to, I believe that a nontechnical role suits me much better. In the future, I would like to be involved in technical areas, but working on nontechnical aspects.

For any underclassmen looking for internships with startups, the best thing to do is directly contact them. Startups are some of the most approachable companies, but they don't always have advertised positions. Simply writing an email demonstrating your interest in the company and their product can go a long way. If there isn't a role available that you would like, startups are pretty flexible, especially with internships. Talk with them about what you would want to do at the company, and you'll be able to work something out. The M&T and Penn alumni directories are great places to start looking for internships. I have contacted several alumni for internship, advice, etc. Many of them are very willing and eager to help out current students.