Part 1

My first week at the Koger Center for the Arts started off slow for the first two days as I got a feel for the building as well as what was expected out of me and things that I absolutely needed to know how to do. For example, my first task was learning how to digitally change and schedule the marquee to advertise future shows outside of the building. This is obviously important because my work is immediately reflected outside to the general public. Luckily, I was given extensive instructions and was able to ask questions so I learned quickly and can now do it with no supervision. I also sat in on meetings with my boss, Nate Terracio, the Koger Center Building Director, that planned out parking and shuttle availability for USC and high school graduations. By the third day, I was able to get hands on experience of how events are conducted by being a greeter during hooding ceremonies and convocations to assist guests with anything they needed. I did this for most of the week working with Jeannie Weingarth, the house manager. The next week was a completely different experience due to the fact that the theater was completely focused on the week-long stay of the The Book of Mormon to officially close out the 2017-2018 Broadway in Columbia season. Due to The Book of Mormon being the large production it was, in addition to greeting and helping out with the front of house things, I also worked as a part of stage crew and assisted with load ins and load outs until past 2:00 am. It was during this time that I learned the most about the performing arts business. I met a lot of people who were stagehands for a living and traveled from place to place to do technical work for concerts, plays, and even sporting events. I also learned the importance of stagehand unions and the detriments of South Carolina not having any. Also, on the nights I was a greeter for Book of Mormon, I was able to see the actual show twice and I was blown away. However, my awe wasn’t because of the actual show, even though it was quite stellar. I was blown away seeing all of the sets and effects of the show coming together and moving so effortlessly on stage after participating in the grueling hours of manual labor it required to put together and it would later take to take apart. It was a cool experience to see everything come full circle. Also, during this time, I learned about the plans for a Koger Center rebrand to commemorate the 30th anniversary of the venue’s opening. We have three Mass Communications grad students assisting us with creating a new logo, website, social media, and other things. This will be one of my long-term projects for the summer that I will have a large hand in implementing.

Part 2

1. In total, there are around 15-20 employees at the Koger Center. However, that’s a number based on the base staff members. The number of staff changes depending on what we need. For example, the load out for The Book of Mormon required an upwards of 70 people so there’s a list of people who only come in to do load ins/out for our Broadway shows which is only about 5-7 shows a year. Also, there’s also a standby staff to work Front of House for certain events only, as most events usually require 1-10 workers if any. Because of this, I think that the organization is able to move like a well-oiled machine because every member of the staff is essential but when they need to expand, they’re able to do so.
2. The Koger Center for the Arts is located in the heart of the University of South Carolina campus and downtown Columbia, South Carolina. Due to this, the venue is in a very vibrant part of town and due to being directly next to the USC School of Music, the venue is able to be a home to USC Dance and Music productions.
3. The Koger Center typically doesn’t have any interns so I am a bit of a rarity. I am the only intern so I am able to get to know all of the people I work with a lot better. Many of the people I work under give me walkthroughs of their positions and share stories of their time at the venue. Also, when I was working as stage crew, I was able to ask questions and learn from the people who have worked in places that I’m interested in working in for the rest of my life. Plus, through sitting in on meetings with my boss, I’ve learned a lot about event planning and event implementation.

Part 3

I got to know Chip Wade, our Marketing Director, a lot over the last few weeks. Chip has been at the Koger Center since it opened, even though he started out as an usher while he was in college. He then worked for the Carolina Coliseum which was the premier event facility in Columbia back then. At this time, tickets for most Columbia, SC events were all sold from the Carolina Coliseum Box Office. Now that the Colonial Life Arena is the prime facility for Columbia events, Chip is back at the Koger Center once again. When I asked him about his hopes for a Koger Center rebrand, he told me about his personal ties to the building and pulled out an old business card where the Carolina Coliseum and the Koger Center were branded together on the logo. He also showed me some of the old colorways for the building through the old stationary as well as stories about the famous Koger red wall. As a person that has seen the Koger Center age throughout the years, Chip wants to see the audience expand and evolve and take a more youthful turn. He also wants to have a better digital presence as well as being more visible in the lively Downtown Columbia community and nightlife.