



The National HEP/CAMP Association DC Internship

Weekly Journal Entry

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Date(s): 06/12/23 - 06/17/23

*Tuesday, June 13*

### **Learning Never Gets Old**

Three weeks in, meaning I only have seven more to go. Time has been going by so fast. I feel like the day goes by slowly but soon I realize it's Friday. My internship has been a learning experience in which I've had the opportunity to pick up more about how our Congress works and what our Reps do on a daily basis. Today I worked on the daily news clips which are a series of articles from reputable sources which we put together to send out to staff to make sure they are up to date with the news. I used to not look at the news at all and at times I was unaware of a series of events going on. Because of this task that I have to do I've gotten in the habit of checking the news on a daily basis. This has allowed me to be more aware of things that are impacting my community and how our government is correcting those issues.

I got to do my first research project in which I got to study on veterans who have been deported. I had never heard of this before and I found it cruel that Latinos who served in the military and maybe even were impacted by their service physically, mentally, or emotionally were deported. Being in this internship, as I said before, has allowed me to be more aware of issues that are occurring or have occurred and how they impact our communities.

I got the opportunity to attend a briefing for one of Rep. Grijalva's committees. The place in which the hearing took place was astonishing; the architecture always shocks me. But the hearing itself was sort of a novela. You might be asking, what are the similarities between a novela with a committee briefing? Well, there is so much drama it almost seems as if it was scripted and the Representatives are characters. Even though they do a great job at bringing up facts and why they want to take certain actions towards certain bills, they bring up the most random things. Meaning they go out of context a lot which shows why they can take up to four hours just briefing. But I got to feel the real experience of what briefings are like and how ideas come about in committees. After that, Angelica, a fellow intern from CHCI, took us to the tunnels in which we were able to take the subway toward the capitol. I feel good being considered part of the staff of Congress since with my badge I'm able to go into any building without the need to make reservations or anything.

After work, I went back to my apartment and the craving for Mexican food would not go away. The sadness of there not being any good Mexican restaurants never goes away. I and my roommate decided to make chicken flautas. They turned out delicious and I think they might just have become my comfort food. 10:00 pm and it's time to get ready for the next day and get ready to go to sleep. My friends always judge me on the fact that I go to sleep early but personally, I like getting my 8 hours of sleep in daily to make sure I'm mentally and physically prepared for the challenges that come through the day.

*Wednesday, June 14*

## **Breaking the Routine**

I got to leave work early; by work I mean my internship. Don't get me wrong, I love my internship and the opportunities I've been given to grow but sometimes breaking that routine of the 9 am - 5 pm is good. I got the opportunity to chaperone for the CHCI New Leaders which is a group of high school students who get the opportunity to come to D.C. for a week. My group consisted of students from Arizona, Colorado, and Nevada. My partner was Kat, a CHCI Alumni who was a CHCI fellow before. She is from Tucson Arizona and is currently still working on the hill.

To start off we had lunch at the Longworth cafeteria which was really packed like always but it is one of the cheapest cafeterias you can find on the hill. After our lunch break, we headed to our first meeting which was with Raul Grijalva, my Rep. I always love seeing people's faces light up as they go into our office and see how much artwork and color we have. Our students were inspired by the artwork which is mostly gifted to Grijalva by people from his community. We headed into our meeting with Angelica and soon Grijalva joined us. The students were moved by his stories of how he first felt when coming into the office and taught us a lesson about always knowing your worth and never doubting yourself. The students after that meeting met with a senator from Colorado. After our last meeting was finished, we had about one hour of free time. But priorities came first and we had to get ice cream. Then after we went to the National Library of Congress which had breathtaking art. At 5 pm we were done with chaperoning and I went back to my apartment.

I had to change really quickly because we were going to head to the annual congressional baseball game. Irene Bueno, the co-Founder and Partner of Nueva Vista Group, got us front-row tickets for the game. I had never been to a baseball game before but I really enjoyed it. It was funny to see how competitive Republicans were and I mean good for them as they ended up winning. I had a great time with all the other HEP/CAMP Interns as we enjoyed the game, and screamed when we saw how bad our Reps were but it's okay.

I love going out to events in which I get to network but it's sometimes hard to be able to go after an eight-hour shift to socialize with people. I've been working on pushing myself even when I feel tired because I know these opportunities won't come again. One thing about D.C. is that there are networking events on a daily basis and I know that since I'll only be here for two months I need to make the most out of it.



*Thursday, June 15*

## **La Casa Blanca**

Today I attended my first hearing but sadly it was online. The hearing was on the federal Prison Oversight Act. I recently took CRJ 230 and was really interested in how prisons work and under what circumstances are prisoners in. This hearing allowed me to understand more about the inequalities that happen in prison. They talked about how prisoners are facing health issues because of the facility's inadequacy in keeping a safe and healthy facility. They talked about how staffing issues are impacting the way prisons are run.

I came to know more about issues with corrections through this hearing than in the course I took this spring.



My day after work was memorable. I got to attend the screening of *Flamin' Hot*. The screening took place on the White House lawn. I was almost freaking out when we walked through the White House to get to the lawn. There were so many famous people including the actors of the movie. I got to meet some famous Tik Tokers and comedians. We also got to meet the President as he came to give a speech. It was an experience I will never forget and which I'm glad I shared with the rest of the CHCI Interns. The movie was inspiring and truly showed the challenges and struggles we as Latinos go through; I recommend it.

To think that a little girl migrating at eight years old was able to work hard enough to only be a couple of feet away from the President of the United States. I'm walking proof that whatever you place your mind to is possible but as I have said before, "hard work meets talent."

*Friday, June 16*

### **What Makes Your Identity?**

Our weekly programming this week revolved around identity. We learned about what makes up our identity and how we want to identify. Before this session, I had not really thought about my identity. I became self-aware that most of the time I identify as Mexican. Why might you be asking? Well, I came to see that I identify more with my Mexican culture rather than American. Yes, I am American but I don't feel like one. Never have I practiced their culture or had the same values as them. I have found how important it is to find your identity and embrace it because, at the end of the day, it's how you show yourself to everyone. For example, when someone asks you, what do you identify as? What is your answer and why?

We also learned more about our types of leadership and the different qualities we have. I think becoming self-aware of your strengths and weaknesses is crucial to growing and learning as a leader. I have come to learn more about myself through this programming than I have through my first year at ASU. I know that through this summer I will be able to grow personally and professionally as I keep working on those weaknesses and learn from experiences.



Saturday, June 17

### Early Morning

Our morning started by going kayaking, I had never gone kayaking before and was really nervous. We kayaked at the Potomac River and it was so beautiful. Annai was my partner and we sort of struggled to get started as it was both our first time. The wind was almost taking us as the current was really strong but we were able to hang on for one hour. I really enjoy doing new things and finding out what I like and what I don't. After our little adventure, we headed to get breakfast and ended up in an acai bowl place. They were really good but personally, I think they overcharged us for what we got but that's how every restaurant in D.C is. After we recharged, we went shopping and walked around Georgetown which is one of the fanciest places I have seen.

We later went home and made dinner. Later that night some of the interns came to our room and made cookies while we were playing UN. Nights like this are the ones that I love. I like being able to just be home and have fun with my friends. I have come to know them more through hanging out together than through programming.

