

The National HEP/CAMP Association DC Internship

Weekly Journal Entry

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Date(s): June 5 - 11, 2023

Monday, June 5, 2023

WELCOME TO THE PENTHOUSE

Today marks my first day at the USDA in the Office of Partnership and Public Engagement (OPPE). My supervisor Matthews Smith came down to the lobby to escort me after passing through the security check. I was a little nervous as Matthews seemed to be more on the strict side and is a tall gentleman. To my surprise, he is not as strict as he seems and is really nice. He gave me a quick tour around and introduced me to Joshua Moose and other staff who were in the office. After, he took me down to the South Building to get my fingerprints done.

I started off with a small side project as I did not have a computer yet. I went to the 5th floor in the Jamie L. Whitten Building to check that the door locks were working. By then it was lunch time and Joshua invited me to Potbelly. As we were eating lunch, we were conversating and something that stood out to me was when he said, "Master your skills within 2 or 3 years and keep moving up." Afterward, we headed back to the office and continued my side project.



Tuesday, June 6, 2023

AGRICULTURE IS NOT JUST SOIL

Today, I was able to attend the 1890 Center of Excellence Student Success and Workforce Development Symposium, which I joined accidentally. I was roaming around looking for Matthews and Joshua when I bumped into a fellowship program happening and was invited to sit in. I was able to meet a lot of people who even though we had no similar backgrounds, we did have common interests. Some of those interests were Future Farmers of America (FFA) and my major, Agricultural Business. Some of the attendees gave me a speech and some of common phrases they shared with me are the following:

“You’re too young to stop.”

“Agriculture is not just soil.”

“Leave the door open.”

“It’s not always comfortable. It is not always easy.”

“Working in core production agriculture is not easy, but it is rewarding.”

After leaving the symposium, I started a new inventory project given by Joshua. As the clock hit 5:00 p.m., I headed out and decided to go out for a walk down to the Lafayette Square, includes several statues of revolutionary heroes, before heading home.





Wednesday, June 7, 2023

HALFWAY THROUGH THE WEEK

Halfway through the week, I was able to shadow Matthews during some of his meetings. The first meeting was the FY25 Chapter 11 and the second one was the Update Farm Bill TA. In both meetings, I was able to learn new terms, what category things fall into, what provisions they contain, and the development processes. It was also the first day, I was able to meet Willette Squire, Writer Editor, who I got the opportunity to know on a personal level and let me just say she makes the office so much fun. She is also new to the office but has been working at the USDA for quite some time now. She provides me with tips and some advice that I plan to take on the long run.

Thursday, June 8, 2023

AGLEARN TRAINING DAY

Today, my day started by finishing the key lock report where I reviewed the ley list capabilities and reported to ensure full accuracy. Along with annotating keynotes, I was asked to label the keys to avoid confusion. I also shadowed Matthews in the AgWrite Information Session which was presented by Nuvitek (USDA anticipated control correspondence system) and went over the BPA and other project management ideas.

I was also able to finish most of the training given to me such as Section 508, USDA Information Security Awareness Training, PII Fact Sheet, and Understanding & Interrupting Unconscious Bias.

Friday, June 9, 2023

WEEKLY FRIDAY PROGRAMMING

Most of the week, the office attire is casual but on Fridays is business professional for CHCI Programming. I enjoyed wearing professional clothing as it makes me feel more confident. In today's programming, we had sessions going over defining leadership, exploring styles of leadership, and making our own S.M.A.R.T. Goals. Overall, we were able to explore and define different leadership styles to learn more about ourselves and how to use our leadership traits in our workforce. From there, we transitioned into discussing project management and how that impacts us in our work and in our daily life. We created two different S.M.A.R.T. Goals. One of what I would like to accomplish by the end of the 10 weeks and the second one, what I would like to achieve for the long run. After wrap-ups and announcements, we headed back home and had a small gathering.



Weekend, June 10-11, 2023

CHCI 5K

Saturday, I was a sat-back and felt that my week was all over the place. I decided to wake up late, cleaned my room a little, and did some laundry. I also wanted to get enough rest for Sunday's Volunteer event.

Every year the CHCI does a 5K run, this year it was called "CHCI 5K RUN TO LEAD" where all 28 interns have the option to volunteer or be a runner. Most of us decided to volunteer but there were a few who ran, two HEP/CAMP interns ran, Brayan Garcia and Antonio Gutierrez-Estrada. All the other interns who were volunteers were placed to help and guide the runners to the correct place. After all, the runners crossed the finish line, they had food and music and all the interns along with other runners started to dance.

