

The National HEP/CAMP Association DC Internship

Weekly Journal Entry

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Date(s): May 27 – Jun 4, 2023

Saturday, May 27, 2023

GOODBYE BAKERSFIELD, HELLO WASHINGTON D.C.

Welcome to my journey! The first thing I would like to recommend to new interns is "DO NOT PACK YOUR SUITCASES LAST MINUTE". This is a tip I did not listen to very well. I left Bakersfield at 2:30 a.m. with my mother, my CAMP Advisor, Erika Madrigal, and Itzel Garcia, CAMP staff. We headed to Los Angeles International Airport (LAX) where it was time to say goodbye.

As I waited at the LAX to depart, I got anxious by the thoughts of what Washington D.C. would bring me. Before I knew it, I had arrived at the Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport, where I was first greeted by Virginia Flores, CAMP Student Services Advisor. Who right off the bat struck a conversation with me and made me feel more at ease. She led me to where the other interns were awaiting with Patrick Doone, the HEP/CAMP Director at the University of South Florida.

After leaving the airport and getting to meet the other interns, we were taken to the Hotel Hive where we were staying for the first night. Unfortunately, my roommate Anna Bedolla-Gutiérrez had her flight canceled, so we did not meet until later that night. After having some time to put our stuff down and rest, the other interns and I headed out to eat dinner. It felt like a whole new family because while we were all new to each other, we were having conversations as if we already knew one another. Instead of heading back to the hotel room, we decided to take a walk down to the White House. Shortly after, we got a message from Patrick saying that Anna had arrived. I was nervous but also excited to meet the person I was going to be sharing a home with for the next 10 weeks. And well, I am glad to say we kicked it off, since we share many common interests.



Sunday, May 28, 2023

DC EXPLORATION DAY

Virginia and Patrick were not joking when they said, “Washington D.C. is all about walking, so make sure to bring comfortable shoes”. Our first day started by checking in at the George Washington University dorms (GW). From there the interns and I headed to the metro, where Virginia and Patrick showed us how to read the maps and learn the metro system. We started to get off in different stations, depending on where our internship placements were located. In my case, my exit was the Smithsonian exit, where the National Mall is centrally located in Washington, D.C. Which is why I think my exit is the best. However, don’t get the National Mall confused with an actual shopping mall. This is an area where the Monuments, the Capitol, and all the Smithsonian museums are located, and is a beautiful view.

As we headed to the Holocaust Memorial Museum, which became my favorite museum, we had the chance to see the “Rolling to Remember” event. This is where many motorcyclists were riding with flags to bring awareness to the mental health crisis among veterans. Once we entered the Holocaust Museum, we were given an Identification Card of someone who lived during the Holocaust and can read a little about them. In my case, I got Israel Yitzak Kisielnicki. As I kept walking around, my eyes kept opening, looking from one side to another and reading all the information. As we left, I was mesmerized by everything I saw and read.

Now by this time, it was around 2:00 p.m. and all the interns and I had skipped breakfast that morning, even though Virginia and Patrick had told us that we could go to Whole Foods for a bite. So, all the interns were starving, but none of the interns said anything about food until Patrick asked if we wanted to go to Union Station to eat. After eating we made a quick run to Target to buy other items we needed for the dorm. By 6:00 p.m. we had to get COVID tested by CHCI, where thankfully we all came back negative. They gave us a tote bag with some supplies and provided pizza. We ended the day and headed back to the dorm to rest.



Monday, May 29, 2023

MEMORIAL DAY

Now this is where the fun and a LOT of walking started, as the interns and I were ready to make our way down to different historical sites. We started off with the Lincoln Memorial, which honors the 16th president of the United States, Abraham Lincoln. After, we headed to the World War II Memorial, which is dedicated to Americans who served the armed forces and civilians during World War II. At that point, we were all excited by the different views, but it didn't stop there. We then headed to the Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial, that honors his legacy and which in my opinion has one of the best views. As we kept walking, we took many pictures at the Franklin Delano Roosevelt Memorial and the Thomas Jefferson Memorial, where we took cover for a few minutes as it began to rain. The view was something you don't witness in Bakersfield; I was in fact mesmerized. From there we headed to see the National Memorial Day Parade, where I was so amused by the fact of how many people were watching despite the rain. It is a beautiful parade, that passes alongside the National Mall on Constitution Avenue between 7th and 17th Street, to honor the service and sacrifice of generations of Americans. As the parade started to march away, the interns and I decided to go into the National Gallery of Art, which is known as a center of visual art, education, and culture. Once again, I kept getting surprised by all the art surrounding us. I think my favorite sculpture/piece of art would be the huge blue random chicken on the roof. From there we decided to head back to do some grocery shopping and to get ready for the Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute (CHCI) programming.

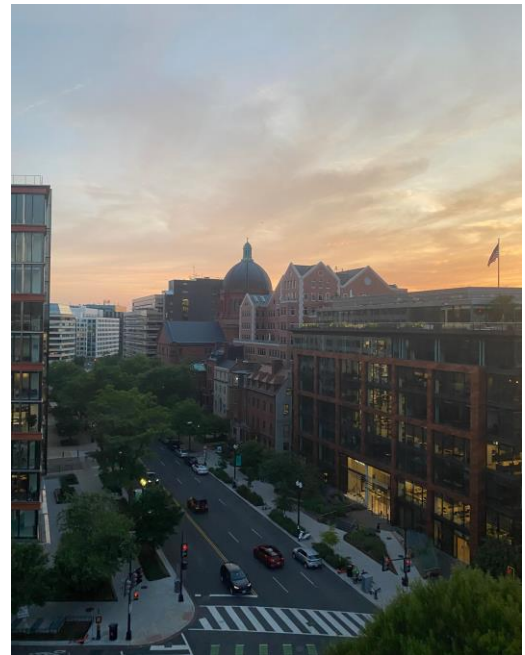


Tuesday, May 30, 2023

CHCI WELCOMING ORIENTATION BEGINS

In the morning, the interns and I headed down to the Navy Yard, where the day started off easy with introducing ourselves and getting to know more about one another in the room. The orientation covered networking, the CHCI Pillars, program expectations, office expectations, and learning to be hard working individual. One thing I was told by everyone was to not wear my heels on the metro, but I did not want to carry an extra bag with an extra pair of shoes, so I went in heels the first day of the orientation. And well, I paid the consequences, not only were my feet hurting but I also got blisters. So, lesson number 1, bring an extra pair of shoes.

Then I met up with Virginia Flores at the Foggy Bottom-GWU, metro station, around 5:45 p.m. to go eat dinner at the NVG office. Not only was it a nice dinner with a nice view, but I was able to meet the other 8 interns of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). I also met Giev Kashkooli, Political and Legislative Director of the United Farm Workers of America, Irene Bueno, the Co-founder and Partner of NVG, Tara Ramsey, Director of Office of Elementary & Secondary Education, Millie Bentley-Memom, Group Leader HEP/CAMP, and Dylan Hart-Medina, Policy Team Lead HEP/CAMP. It was a nice time being able to network with each of them and exchange contact information.



Wednesday, May 31, 2023

CHCI WELCOMING ORIENTATION PT.2

The interns and my morning started off quite similar as the previous day, waking up and heading to Navy Yard once again. Just this time, the metro was a little packed and the doors closed right as I came in and my bag got stuck between the doors. Thankfully, Maria Flores Marquez, fellow intern, pulled my bag. So, lesson number 2, always be in the front and don't get caught by the doors.

As we arrived at the National Association of Broadcasters (NAB) Head Quarters, we took our seats and started by setting our Cohort Norms, then getting into our sessions. These lessons talked about how to effectively write for the Hill and social media 101. Then we had our book discussion: Climbing the Hill within our groups. I was in group 5 with other CHCI interns, and we made a presentation about the main learning outcomes and how to apply them to our internship. We had lunch and then continued with sessions about networking. As we finished with wrap-ups and announcements, we headed home and to our surprise right outside the Foggy Bottom-GWU, every Wednesday there is a Farmers market. It is not a big farmers market, but their \$4 empanadas are amazing. I personally recommend the chicken empanadas.



Thursday, June 1, 2023

CHCI WELCOMING ORIENTATION PT.3

This morning was a bit different, instead of meeting in the Navy Yard the interns and I met at the Capitol Hill Reflecting Pool to take our headshots. The HEP/CAMP interns were the first ones to take their pictures, as after we were going to go visit my office for the first time. After taking my picture, we started to walk over, and I started to think about how the USDA was going to be. As we passed security and made our way up to the second floor, we were greeted by Juan Alvarez, someone who I only knew through email before being accepted into the internship. We walked into the conference room where the other 8 USDA interns were sitting and had a small greeting session. After being able to meet everyone in the room including my supervisor, Matthews Smith, we then headed back to Capitol Hill for the Congressional Hispanic Staff Association. There we were able to hear from current Latino staff, who shared their personal experiences. Followed by the CHCI Alumni on the Hill Panel, where we met Alumni and learned about their day-to-day experience as a CHCI Intern. After wrap-up and announcements, we head home to change into new attires.

We meet at the Foggy Bottom Station at 6:00 p.m. for dinner with all interns down at China Town in a restaurant called Full Kee. To my surprise, my supervisor and other USDA members were invited to join us for dinner. After dinner, Fabiola invited us to go eat some Dolcezza Gelato where I was able to talk more with her as well as my supervisor Matthews. The ice cream place was in the City Center which had a beautiful view of string lights and colorful umbrellas.



Friday, June 2, 2023

CHCI WELCOMING ORIENTATION PT.4

Today was the last day of our welcome week orientation, which took place at the CHCI Headquarters. For the first time, the interns and I were able to dress casual rather than business professional, which is something all interns looked forward to. On this day, we did a lot of team-building activities such as True Colors and Lost at Sea, which taught us about our personalities. After lunch, we had a time management and a growth mindset workshop.

We left a little earlier that day, as we were going to two Congressional Office Visits with Jaqueline Duran, Representative Scott Peters, and Carlos Martinez, Representative Raul Grijalva. After both visits, Annai and Maria, who are fellow interns, got an opportunity to see their offices, we headed back home to change and get ready for our last dinner with all 18 of us together.

At 6:15 p.m. we all met in Shenkman Hall dining, we were all having a good time and having many different conversations. As we all finished our dinner, Carman wanted some dessert, so she got what she thought was vanilla ice cream, and well let's just say we had a good laugh when we found out it was butter.

As we were walking outside and saying our goodbyes, while shedding a few tears some of us decided we would meet tomorrow morning for some coffee before their flight. From there, I head to the movies with some of the interns to watch Spider-man: Across the Spider-Verse, 100% recommended if you have not watched it yet.



Saturday, June 3, 2023

WE MISS YOU PATRICK & VIRGINIA

We headed to Whole Foods to get some coffee and say one last goodbye to Patrick and Virginia. Where Virginia gave me a small little bag which came in handy as I now use it as my lunch bag for work. After we said our final goodbyes, the interns and I hopped on the metro and headed to the Eastern market. Of course, I am always thinking about my doggy, and I found a table selling some dog collars, and I bought a new one for my dog. Yet one of my favorite tables was this handcraft animal figure table. We got to speak with the guy, who came from Peru and has made 100% recycled wood animal figures for quite some time now.

From there Juan (USDA Intern) and I headed down to the Botanical Garden, which had such an amazing view. Anywhere you looked you were surrounded by different types of plants and flowers (Juan became my photographer for the day). After looking around, we got a little hungry and headed down to Columbia Heights to Haikan to eat some ramen.

Later that night, we headed out for a walk towards Walgreens to buy some snacks and that's how our night ended.



Sunday, June 4, 2023

MEETING NEW PEOPLE

I woke up with the mindset that I was going to go to church, and I did. After having some breakfast, I hopped on the metro and went down to the Jehovah's Kingdom Hall in Columbia Heights. It was about 35 minutes in the metro. Once I got there, I was greeted by a lot of people who would soon become close friends. After the meeting finished, and I exchanged numbers with some people, I headed back home.

Once home we made plans to go to the National Air and Space Museum where one of my favorite attractions was the motor racing section. We also bought tickets for the showing of the Dark Universe planetarium. While looking around the Museum, I got closer to Christopher, and later the day, we built a Lego piece set together.

