

The first day of my internship with the Office of Migrant Education! I knew the metro was going to be busy, but I did not imagine I would have to push my way into the train car. It took a bit of self-navigation, but I found my way to my office and workspace. I re-met everyone on my staff briefly before I was stationed to adjust myself to my new cubicle. Later that Monday I attended a briefing about Nonalcoholic Steatohepatitis, NASH which is a nonalcoholic fatty liver disease that is a silent killer that impacts the Latinx community at a higher rate than other ethnic groups. Being a part of such briefing opened my eyes to the different type of work that is done on the hill and recognized the role that interns have in debriefing their representatives and senators who are often way too busy to attend such briefings like this. Yet they have the potential to be critical influencers if they make sure to highlight the importance of problems that can affect their constituents such as this to their congress members.

Other things I noticed throughout my week was the shift in diction I experience in my workplace and while attending certain congressional events. Everyone has different lingo to function and it works efficiently to get things done at an efficient pace, but if I was not familiar with it my mind would wander and I found it hard to keep up with what was being said. The Office of Migrant Education staff, however, was very patient and kind with me and reassured me that if they could be of any help they were more than happy to assist me. Their work environment is one of the most genuine and friendliest places I have been in and I feel like part of the family already. The program director Lisa Gillette pulled me aside to get coffee and talk about myself.

I dove in head first and told her where my story truly begins, which is with my parents' migrant story. My mother had been working in Mexico and was getting ready to re-apply to university in her home state of Morelos, while my father was starting to attend university in Guadalajara and applying for a job as a teacher. Both got the one in a lifetime opportunity to come to the United States and they obviously could not refuse. While they both were starting their careers in Mexico they saw better opportunities coming to the United States. They met here in Nevada and got married and with marriage and a new life came the need for steady incomes. My mother started in agricultural work while my father took the route of construction. They moved from Nevada to California where they had my older sister and ended up settling in Oregon where they had me. My mother continued working in the onion and potato fields for a while until she realized that half her paycheck was not worth spending on the babysitter who got to see her children more than she did. She then became a stay at home mom but because of this, we ended up seeing my father less and less. He would have to pick up extra hours to make ends meet. The nights we did see him, my sister and I would fight over who would get to take off his muddy boots before he knocked out from the day's work. I explained to her that when my parents finally decided to risk everything by applying for residency they almost lost it all. They primarily wanted their strong case to be based on my older sister and I's academic and extracurricular performance. This, however, would have made their deportation more probable. Our ray of hope was actually through my youngest sister who was diagnosed with autism at the time. With her need both in services and the emotional support, only my parents could give her, along with my parents' clean record they were able to get their residency this past year. I got choked up telling this story to her and many of the OME staff, but I needed them to know that the work they do does affect kids and young adults like my siblings and I have one less thing less to worry about at home. School should be the rock in our lives and a place where every child deserves to perform at their best.

I found each OME staff member I had a one-on-one meeting with to be very supportive and selfless. Repeatedly they assured me that the work they put forth is for the kids they serve, and they do so to the best they can. This made me more motivated to put in my best too and learn as much as I can throughout this internship to let others know of the amazing work that is done on the federal level for migrant students.

During our Friday CHCI Session I was able to hear the different perspectives and experiences other Latinx interns were facing in their offices. One thing to note is that my office only has one other intern working with me this summer and she still does not start until next week. As for these other interns, they announced that some of them have up to 13 other interns in their office. While working on the Hill is very prestigious, the work load that comes along with it is anything but light. After many got a chance to voice their frustrations and joys we had to move onto other schedule activities for the day. We participated in activities that revealed what type of personality best matches us and I found out that could be identified as a Gold Type Personality. Meaning I have identifiable characteristics such as being dependable, thorough, stable, caring, efficient, etc. I found it refreshing to hear these qualities that I possess but also found it useful to know what could set me off, into a bad mood such as: lack of order, irresponsibility, laziness, high risk-taking, etc. Just typing those traits made my chest feel tight. Luckily, I was stressed no longer when we were able to get a tour of the Mexican Cultural Institute of Washington DC where I felt the connection with my roots that I was long yearning for. The tour was very vibrant and informative. Learning the history of any culture is interesting, but when it's your own the feeling is certainly incomparable.

Saturday. Finally, a day where I can enjoy some needed sleep and free time! I ended up joining some interns so a trip to the beach. What I expected was to enjoy some time with my feet in the sand and turn a shade darker. What I did not expect at the slightest was that I would have to pay \$17 to step foot onto the sand. The water was way saltier than I expected and murkier too. Nonetheless I made that \$17 worth it and experienced the all the parts of the Chesapeake Bay that I could. Sunburnt by the time I got back to George Washington, Karla and I were not done with the day. We decided to take a walk towards the Lincoln Memorial and visited all the surrounding memorials as well. In doing so and just taking a minute to let it all soak in I turned to her and let out a shriek of excitement proclaiming at her that we are truly here in Washington DC doing this, experiencing things, living here.

Sunday rolled around, and I was exhausted from the whole week. Sort of sick of being around people so after church I tended to myself and my space making sure that it was clean before I got started prepping for the next week. Yet in isolating myself I notice that I became sad for some reason I did not comprehend at the time. I decide to take a walk and invited another intern to join me. Turns out they were feeling the same way. I think the home-sickness finally caught up to me. I had never really felt home-sick throughout my first-year of college, but as soon as I realized that I would not get to spend much time with them during the summer due to the internship I think it started to set in little by little. Father's Day must have been what set it off. As I called my parents intentionally for the first time this week I became emotional and they noticed. They reassured me that I would be fine and that they were very proud of who I was becoming. They said that though they weren't with me physically, they were living and traveling through my experience. Though this made me even more emotional I understood that I had been bottling up my feelings for so long that I needed to let them out. Again, the fast-paced world of D.C. was getting to me, but hopefully, in the days to come, I can find balance within it.



World War II Memorial:

Throughout the walk we were completing inbetween these memorials I developed a new found respect for those who serve. I do not have much background context with anything involving wars or the military other than what I was taught at school. However, walking through these memorials, feeling the ethos and understanding what they symbolized for many embeded the utptmost graditude in my soul for those who selflessly defend our country. True freedom is never free.

