

Meetings, Meetings, Meetings. Getting to know the OME staff is something I am very appreciative of. Within the conversations I have with them grows my appreciation towards them for working to promote success for the underrepresented. I am very excited to be able to contribute to this year's Annual Directors Meeting for HEP/CAMP that is rapidly approaching. Earlier in the week, I was assigned to produce certificates for this year's awardees and I am humbled by their stories of accomplishment. Another task aligning with the ADM was to prepare and input data for all of the cohorts within HEP/CAMP. While some may find this work tedious I found it very rewarding! At the end of the bulk of data, I found great satisfaction in my work being done correctly. Attending my first board meeting was also very insightful. Seeing how office staff collaborate and delegate effectively within various tasks in short time frames was interesting to witness and be a part of.

Interpersonal connections rose up when Lisa Gillette invited Lorena (fellow OME intern), Elizabeth (past HEP/CAMP and OME intern, and me to lunch. I had met Elizabeth during the week of orientation, and I was glad to see her again. I found peace in knowing that connections made in DC can be genuine. People who want to see you succeed will always want to know how you are doing, so it is important to keep them updated.

I was hyper-focused on data, and I found myself entering a cycle of tedious work. However, the human aspect of this work can get lost if you only look at the numbers, but it is real people that are affected by the decisions made and policies implemented by OME. I make sure to give myself time to reflect, even if it's just for a minute to remind myself of the people that will be impacted by this work. Even the most minuscule task makes a difference. The final task given for the week was to assist in note taking during a meeting where a coordination workgroup consisting of different members of regions come together to discuss areas of progress and needed assistance. I found myself consumed with what was being discussed. In some sense, I was a member of the community they were serving, but I have to admit I was a bit confused with the terminology they often referred to in the discussion. While I took notes for OME, I also made notes for myself, so I could review them later and do a little research to prepare for my next meeting.

Thursday evening, my fellow interns and I had the pleasure of having dinner with Dr. Lisa Ramirez and her family. We were able to hear her story, and I was definitely fangirling over her the whole time. She was very impressive and made a lasting impression on me, and I have a great deal of admiration for her. While her upbringing was unconventional, she made the most of it, and she is very proud to be serving her community across the country. Lisa is a remarkably humble person, and though I was dying to take notes of all her words of wisdom, I settled in for the hours of frank discussions we shared with her and her family. Being able to relate, understand, and engage in meaningful conversation is ultimately where I find true happiness throughout my days here. We made plans for next Monday, so we were ecstatic knowing that we would add another ally to our cabinet.

CHCI Friday! We were given a quick overview about how bills become laws, participated in a workshop about writing opposite editorials(OP-ED), and got to hear from more professional Latinx members here in Washington D.C. One thing that really stood out to me from hearing the speakers was quoted verbatim, "...had you not had the resources, your story wouldn't be the one that it is today." This really spoke to me because it is true. Although I live in rural Oregon, people who look predominantly like me surround me. Because the local population is made up of mostly seasonal farmworkers, a steady job with reliant income is most important, so education is not pushed as a priority to everyone in the area. With wages rising many see it as a job that will provide a hefty

paycheck. It is up to the individual when growing up to see that the work of a farmworker is actually damaging in the end. I would come home and find my mother exhausted and in pain from the days and years of agricultural work. She stressed the importance of an education on my siblings and me, and she emphasized using our brains more than our bodies. My parents repeatedly told me that my only job was home and school. My parents made sure that we never needed anything else. They always made sure that we were provided for even if it was at the expense of their wellbeing. As I grew up and saw others my age getting jobs, I questioned my parents if I should get one as well. Without hesitation, they told me no and reminded me of the ultimate goal. My parents are the first members of my cabinet. They knew that through my education, I would ultimately gain the best job I would want; and if all goes to plan, I would never work a day in my life since it would be my vocation and not a job.

However, being the realist that I am, I know things are not always a straight-line path to success. Meeting and hearing from the CEO of CHCI only validated this point. While our career paths may take sharp twists and turns, we must always keep our actions intentional. Unintended consequences may result, but we must face them regardless. It is through them that we grow and find out, not what kind of career we want, but what kind of life we want to live. Coming to DC and being able to share this experience with a group of distinct and exceptional folks, I realize that there are many smart and dedicated people in the room just like me. This fills me with confidence. I see it as an opportunity to have conversations that validate my thought process but also challenge them. With them, I feel as though I am being given the opportunity to learn from new experiences, theirs.

Learning from last week, I avoided cooping myself up in my room and went out! Us HEP/CAMP lady interns reserved tickets to the US Holocaust Memorial Museum and the experience was definitely an overwhelming somber one, to say the least. Having the privilege to experience the museum's permanent exhibition that explains the history of the Holocaust from 1933 to 1945 was one that I made sure to highlight and document on my social media platforms. My sister actually called me before I had entered the museum and just knowing that I have smaller siblings back home that could learn from my experience made me want to document it for them to see. To my surprise others back home also enjoyed and thanked me for my documentation, saying they felt as if they were alongside me. Filling my bucket of happiness, I was glad that I was able to experience it for myself but also create an experience for others back home.

