

## Week One

The first few days in Washington DC have been an experience like none other. Everything about the city's living environment and structure is amazing. Having previously visited the city in 2016, I have noticed some changes but for the most part, the city is still vibrant and full of community. This first week has been an insight of what awaits us in the coming days. From workshops on improving our resumes to tips on how to network, the CAMP interns and I have gathered plenty of information and skills that prepared us for our internships in Washington DC.

From day one, the connection between all the Camp interns has been great. Patrick Doone has been a great mentor to all of us and has paved a way for our success. I shared with the interns that Patrick is to me like my second dad because he is such easy-going and really cares about our success. It was sad to see him go but we were all happy with all the great advice that he gave us. I think that Patrick was an essential key to helping us establish our confidence as we prepare for our journey in a new city. He made us aware that we deserve to be here and that everyone has the chance to have an impactful experience.

One of the most memorable parts of this first week has been joining the Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute interns. They all bring a unique and different background connecting us through our Latinidad. I was so excited to see Latinos representing the countries of Cuba, Colombia, Nicaragua, and El Salvador, which is something I do not see often within my community. Each intern had something different to share and their experiences are very distinct from one another. It is so motivating to see so many Latinos as strong activist towards issues that are affecting their communities. I think that being able to see the number of Latinos that care about our issues makes me see this country in a progressive way.

One thing that I was very excited about was seeing how many of the interns were from places that I am familiar with. One of the interns is from the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley which is where I am from. Quickly, we began talking about one of our favorite places to eat, Delias Tortilleria. I was also able to meet interns from the University of Michigan, which is my Michigan State's rival school. Then, I met about 15 interns from my university home, Michigan State University. This is when I realized the significance of the expanded network, possible because of my university endeavor.

Networking in Washington DC is completely different from networking in East Lansing, MI. Things move at a faster pace and people tend to be very impatient. This makes it a little more challenging to deliver a business card to someone. Nevertheless, being outgoing and showing interest has allowed me to secure a few business cards thus far. I am confident that I will continue to meet people and expand my social circle within the DC area. Meeting people can be difficult but once you have adjusted to the flow of things everything just seems to fall into place.

Realizing that DC makes the rest of world feel small is what has amazed me the most. I remember seeing the Russian ambassador's house and realizing that DC lives up to its name when referred to as, the political capital of the world. Walking through Capitol Hill and passing

by our Representative's offices makes DC feel even more amazing. I remember one of the coordinators of the CHCI program stating that what happens in local news is national news. Overall, DC has been something I have been thinking about since I was 15-year-old and now that I am actually here, I am starting to accept that this is a reality.