

My Journal

By Karla Denise Arana

Week 9 (July 30-August 5, 2018)

My last week in DC was amazing and full of experiences. I had time to make meaningful connections and to focus on absorbing as much knowledge as possible. I used this opportunity to get to know the staffers, their stories, and their journeys to get to where they are in DC. It was also heartbreaking to have to leave DC and say goodbye to the other interns.

During the week, I had lunch with the Chief of Staff, Victor Castillo. I felt fortunate to have had the opportunity to get to know him and personally connect with him. We talked about our lives and our personal stories. It felt great to truly connect with someone on a personal level, especially after spending so much time immersed in the professionalism of DC. I wish I had the opportunity to talk to him at the beginning of the internship. I also went to grab coffee with Victoria Rivas, who is the staffer in charge of foreign affairs. Her story about how she got to DC was very amazing and interesting to hear about. I'm thankful to have had the opportunity to hear about it. I had lunch with the other staffers and it was beyond amazing to be able to bond with knowledgeable people and people who would be happy to help in the future.



The best part of my last week was going to my favorite place in DC, Georgetown Waterfront Park. I sat there looking at the river, with Virginia as a scenic backdrop. During this time, I reflected on my experience. It felt surreal that I actually had just worked in a congressional office for two months. I felt thankful for the amazing opportunity, and very ready to go back to my community, to give back what I could, after



learning many things in DC. I was ready to go back to Kansas and to raise awareness in people about the lack of diversity in Congress, and how they can use local governments in Kansas to help gain representation. The knowledge that I gained from this internship is going to guide my path in life. I'll make sure I come back to DC and make changes for the betterment of my community.