

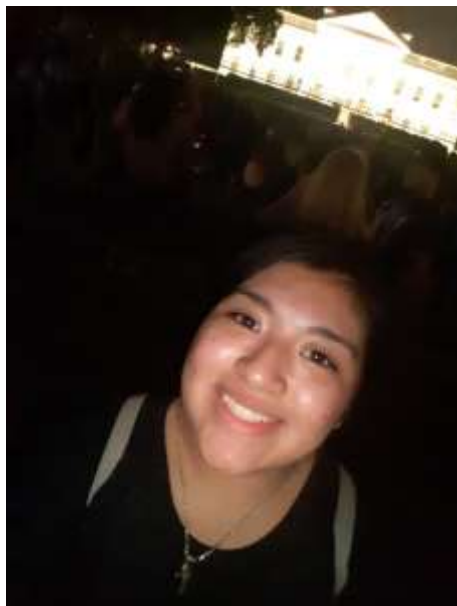
Julia Santiago

Week 1: May 25-June 1

On Saturday, May 25th. I woke up at 3 a.m. to be at the airport by 4am. It did not feel real that I was going to be an intern in Washington D.C. up until I got on the plane and found myself thinking, “Okay I am really doing this, I am going to D.C.!” When I landed in D.C. I was excited to meet Patrick Doone and ready to take on anything.

The first week of being here in D.C. has been an emotional rollercoaster. I appreciate all Patrick has done for the interns and me. He has been a great mentor but also an amazing friend. During the first week, he made sure we had everything we needed, was our tour guide, and was extremely caring. He has played a key role for our success in D.C. but in our placements, too. It was sad saying bye on Saturday, but we will see him soon at the Annual Directors Meeting in July.

The first day in D.C. I had the chance to get to know the rest of the interns. I was amazed that even though we were from different states, we all came from similar backgrounds. That is why on one of the reasons why I love being a CAMPer. We might be from different parts of the country, but our stories resonate with one another. Later that first day, I had the chance to walk around and tour the city. I got to see the US Capitol, Lincoln Memorial, and realized that “The Mall,” is not a shopping mall but the strip where the monuments are located.



Starting on Tuesday, we had training with the Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute (CHCI). I enjoyed listening from leaders that look like me that are people of color, sharing their empowering stories. Some of the CHCI leaders started as interns and worked their way up. Listening to these speakers made me realize, yet again, that “Si Se Puede.” Being considered a minority in this country should not stop you from achieving the goals you have for yourself. The CHCI interns are amazing, and I quickly made friends with a few. They all come from diverse backgrounds and represent countries like Honduras, Brazil, Ecuador and other amazing places. I look forward to getting to know them more and to see them during Friday programming.

I also had the chance to visit Congressional Offices and the U.S Department of Education (where I will be working). Some of the goals I set for myself are to learn more about educational polices, learn more about myself, and to represent my community. Overall, I am excited to take in everything that I will learn, and enjoy my experience during my time in Washington D.C. I am extremely grateful to have a supporting family that values my education and supports me through every step I take in my career.

