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Week 4

“When values, thoughts, feelings, and actions are in alignment, a person becomes focused and character is strengthened.” John C. Maxwell

It seems as almost if yesterday I had just barely arrived in Washington D.C. and was meeting all the other HEP CAMP interns for the first time. It has been about a month since I have first arrived and I cannot believe how fast time has flashed by. So far, my internship experience has taught me a lot about myself and has expanded my scope of vision for once I am finished with my undergraduate career. I have met a lot of people in their careers and have attended several professional development events, which has given me the realization that every career path is different and it is my own responsibility to find a career path that is unique to me and that is something that I find inspiring. Before participating in this honorable opportunity, I saw law school in my near future; however, after speaking to some individuals who are more advanced in their careers, I see other opportunities that are available for me that I would have otherwise never considered. Although I definitely see myself obtaining a juris doctorate degree, I am considering taking a few years off after my undergraduate years to work in law firms that deal with a variety of humanitarian issues that interest me as well as attending a public policy master’s program that discusses immigration policy. I am learning that I am still young with no rush to attend law school and that it is important to focus on matters that are important to me before taking on a big financial and time commitment such as law school.

This week at work fluctuated a bit in regard to the workload. On Monday and Tuesday, my workload was paced normally and I did not feel overwhelmed. Most days in the office are pretty laid back and I usually am focusing on one to two projects at a time. Wednesday, however, was my busiest day of the week since Sarah, one of the program officers of OME, had a time-sensitive project for my co-worker, Kim, and I to work on and wanted the project to be completed before a meeting she had the next day. Kim and I stopped everything that we were working on to work together on the project that Sarah had assigned. Kim and I had originally planned to get to work early that day to leave an hour early since we wanted to get free ice-cream at the Capitol building. But, we actually ended up leaving around the same time we usually leave and ended up staying an hour later. Although we had not planned for a hectic day, we felt really good and relieved knowing we had completed the project Sarah needed for her meeting.

On Thursday morning, the HEP CAMP interns had the opportunity to meet with the United Farmworkers for breakfast. Along with breakfast, we also all had the opportunity to speak in front of people in a meeting that were deciding on whether or not to provide different types of support services for farmworkers. We were asked by the United Farmworkers to talk about ourselves and our stories and it was a good opportunity to share what we have experienced and what is still happening in farm work. When I was telling my story, I could not help but to tear up a bit since I began to have flashbacks of how laborious and difficult farm work is. Although I

know I may not have influenced everyone in that meeting that all farm workers need better working conditions, I got to share my story and voice my own personal experiences and possibly influenced at least one perspective. I chose the quote above to reinforce the notion that it is crucial to always be central and true to oneself and to always believe in your values because that ultimately holds the power to accomplish anything and to never give up.

Thursday was also a very surreal day for me because...I met AOC!!! Yes, the queen herself Ms. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez. One great tip that I have for all the upcoming interns that are placed in the Department of Education is to always pay attention to the group chat with the rest of the CHCI interns because that is how I found out about the briefing that AOC was speaking at. The Department of Education is located about a fifteen-minute walk from the Capitol and it is sometimes difficult to attend a briefing in the middle of the day; however, if you see a briefing on the hill happenings website that interests you then it is definitely worthwhile to make the hike to the hill on your lunch break. That is what Kim and I did, and we definitely did not regret walking in 90-degree weather and basically missing our lunch to have the opportunity to shake AOC's hand and take a quick picture with such an amazing congresswoman who serves as an inspiration to many individuals in my community.

The weekend was filled with a lot of adventures and new experiences. After CHCI programming on Friday, my roommate, some interns and I decided to go to the National Portrait Gallery and explore Chinatown. On Saturday, all of the interns and I were invited to my director Lisa's house to have barbecue, which was a lot of fun and then on Sunday, the interns and I decided to go to the Arlington cemetery and that was very interesting seeing all the tombstones, especially John F. Kennedy's and those of the former Supreme Court justices.

