

Week 9: Hope, Appreciation, and Love

The HEP-CAMP Director's Meeting week finally came. Unsure of the schedule, all of us interns sat down with the NVG staff to listen to the speakers. We were informed last minute that we needed to give a ~two minute introduction to the directors. I already had something in mind to say, so I was not worried about my speech.

Patrick called us to the stage and we lined up. Metzlin and Jazmine Palacios (NMSHSA Intern) also joined us on stage. Once it was my turn to speak, I promptly introduced myself and expressed how my experience working in the office of Representative Raul Grijlva has been truly amazing and wonderful. I also mentioned, however, about my strong feelings of the "impostor syndrome." As I have said before, I come from a small community in southeastern Colorado, where it is difficult to land great opportunities to build an excellent resume and be 'competitive' with larger schools. There was an audible gasp from the crowd when I said that I graduated high school in a class of nine students. I do not think that my definition of a rural town was the same as theirs, but I am glad that they are now aware of the disproportionate differences that exist in America, and the lack of awareness of amazing out-of-town opportunities in these areas. I also wanted to encourage smaller CAMP universities like Adams State University to apply for this great internship, and not to be discouraged during the application process as I was. I pointed out how supportive my director was when I felt that I was not enough.



*Thank you **Jasmine Camponeschi** for always being supportive and guiding me through the application process. Without your help, and the extraordinary guidance of the CAMP staff, I would not have met some of the most amazing people who are now my CAMP family, and the opportunity to work in one of the best offices to exist on Capitol Hill. Thank you for your patience, kindness, support, and love.*

After doing our introductions, we were presented with a certificate of completion of the 2019 HEP-CAMP internship and received a CAMP alumni pin. After the programming, we set out to Capitol Hill where Jasmine Camponeschi, Jazmine Palacios, and I met with the education staffer for Representative Tipton's office as he represents the district where Adams State University is located. Afterwards, along with the directors for the Metropolitan State University-Denver CAMP and BUENO-HEP, we met with staffers for Senators Bennet and Gardner.

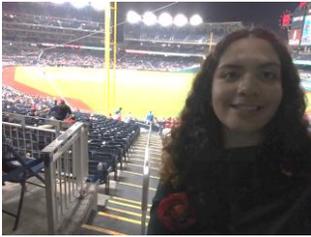
Once we finished, I gave my director and the MSU director, Raquel Jimenez, a small tour through the Capitol. It was cut short in the rotunda because it closed at 4:30 p.m., but I think they enjoyed it. We then took some pictures outside of the Capitol, Supreme Court, and Library of Congress. We headed out to see the White House and went to eat at Bindaas, an Indian restaurant. The food was amazing! I had ordered kheema pao, which I really recommend! We closed the day with the nearby ice cream store, Captain Cookie, and I showed them our dorms at District House in George Washington University to close the day.



Tuesday the CAMP interns helped the Department of Education backstage for most of the day. We needed to leave a bit earlier, however, because we had the CHCI graduation ceremony on Capitol Hill. The ceremony flowed smoothly, and we were able to hear some representatives talk about the internship program and their interns in their office. It was a nice gesture on their part as they have extremely busy schedules.



I only spent a couple hours helping the Director's meeting on Wednesday as I was scheduled to go back into my office after lunch. I had missed the office, and I was set to work as soon as I



arrived. I drafted constituent letters throughout the day and answered phone calls. I was informed that the office had bought tickets for the interns to go see the Nationals baseball game against the Colorado Rockies. Of course, as a proud resident of Colorado, I had to support my state. After work, I went out to eat dinner at the directors meeting and saw all of the interns and their directors, including Patrick and his wife. I was slightly sad that my director's flight was scheduled to leave in the evening, so she was not able to join us for dinner. Since

it was pouring near the Nationals baseball stadium, I gave myself a bit more time to hang out with the directors and interns before they left. Later that evening, my office's interns told me that the game was cleared, so I headed over to the ballpark. Although there were moments that the Rockies stressed me out, they played a good game. It was my first time seeing the Rockies as well.



Thursday arrived, and the day went by normally, drafting letters, answering phone calls, logging constituent calls, and checking digital mail. A committee staffer offered to review the intern's resumes and gave tips to draft them. It was of great help, and we will be meeting with him next week to review our updated resume and see our improvements. Thursday was also National Intern Day; the office interns were recognized in the congressman's social media!

On Friday, we went through normal CHCI programming in the morning. We then headed out to CHCI headquarters to listen to a presentation on being a CHCI alumni and the benefits. Afterwards, we traveled to Facebook to learn about the different types of employment and policies that they are trying to push forward in legislation. We were given some tips for application processes and a tour around the building. I was able to play with the Oculus, a virtual reality game, which I enjoyed messing around with. Later that evening, Wendy, Eduardo, a CHCI intern Carlo, and I headed out to Georgetown to introduce Wendy and Carlo to Georgetown cupcakes. They took some pictures with the sign outside the store and we did the mandatory first bite. We then walked them to the 'Exorcist Steps' to show them the legendary stairs that lead to shortness of breath and tightening of muscles walking up the stairs rather than running into wicked ghosts. We headed over to the Old Stone House's yard in hopes of seeing fireflies in the evening. We then headed back to George Washington University and called it a day.

The following day, Wendy, Eduardo, Julia, and I met up with Carlo to see the Newseum as we got free tickets from CHCI. It made me realize the importance of journalists, and how many of them risk their lives in order for us to see the world through their stories and lenses. The museum had interesting displays, such as the Daily Show, Stonewall, and First Pets. It also contained images of dark times in the world in the past and in the present. One emotion that I always feel when I see the morbid images and videos of the 9/11 attacks or the terrorist artifacts is anxiety. It is a feeling that I would never want to experience, and it is scary to think that we are so vulnerable to these attacks, which many of them happened on a normal day. I saw people older than me shedding tears during a video screening of the journalists that reported the 9/11 attacks. Even though I was not of age to remember that day, I was able to feel the pain and fear that those



people went through. I usually struggle with expressing emotions, but this time, I felt my chest tighten. It was a time of great fear, and an attack to our nation. People witnessed the deaths of thousands of people, and the panic that erupted that day. I do not know what I would have done in that situation, but at the same time, no one does. It makes me appreciate the life I was given even more, and I do not take for granted any second of it.

After the museum, we left to go kayaking in Georgetown, but this time, we finally brought Cathy along with us. Wendy and I shared a kayak, and we trailed behind Eduardo and Carlo around the Potomac River. I had not kayaked to the other side of the 'little island', which displayed a view of the Washington Monument and the Lincoln Memorial. The shallow river and the waves made it hard to paddle, so it ended up being a workout. Afterwards we headed back to George Washington University to drop off Carlo and call it a day. In hindsight, I should have stretched and warmed my arms and body out before I kayaked because my muscles on my left shoulder are tight!



Sunday, after a much needed sleep debt payment, Wendy, Julia, Cathy, and I headed out to buy souvenirs. Safe to say, we did not follow my tips I had given on Week 7's journal. Nevertheless, I did find some nice things for my family, and I got myself a cool rain jacket.

I am not ready for next week to be my last week as a HEP-CAMP intern.

Marlene's Notes

- When buying souvenirs, make sure that all of the words are spelled correctly. I was so close to buying a vest that read "The UNIRED STATES OF AMERICA". I was wondering why it was on sale haha.
- On resumes, place more emphasis on your experience compared to the others. It should take up most of the page. Describe your experiences by using multiple bullet points under the titles.
- There is a Subway restaurant in Rayburn :)

