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Program: *State University of New York - Oneonta*

Placement: *Poder Latinex*

Journal Entry – Week 3

My third week began with my second day of class; we discussed Latinx representation and had a debate about how the community should be referred to. Some argued that Latina and Latino are the terms that should be used while others used country of origin, Hispanic, or the term Latinx. I had been using the word Latinx because I had already reflected on this topic and determined my preferred term. It's essential to use a word that is more inclusive of identities that often fall outside the social norms. Nonetheless, I decided to have an open mind before listening to the debate. I was able to realize the complexity of the use of certain terms. Many consider the term Hispanic as an erasure of indigenous roots and the experience of the community in the United States, Latinidad and Latina or Latino terms are recognized by many as words and concepts that often represent anti-blackness. This surprised me since I had used these terms without this knowledge.

Another topic for our class was whether a person should speak Spanish to be considered part of the Latinx community. To answer this question, I reflected on my own experience and concluded that one does not need to speak the language to be part of the community. After all, I am participating in a CHCI internship even when English is my second language. Some might not find the logic in this argument, but I had the opportunity to learn the language even when I struggled to ask a simple question, when some did not know my story but made assumptions about my potential, while others accepted me and were inclusive. And those who did, those made a difference.

On Wednesday, the cohort met with Sara Fuentes who's a Vice President for Government Affairs at Transportation Institute. She provided some information about her job and professional advice. I found that information helpful as a student learning about the professional world. CHCI does a great job emphasizing representation, so after meeting Sara, we heard from Nelson Cruz who is the Social Media & Digital Content Manager at the Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute (CHCI). He talked about Afro-Latinidad and topics of discrimination. He opened a dialogue about the lack of inclusivity of people of color within our community and the professional world. There's still much work to be done when it comes to colorism and racism, but the cohort highlighted the importance of accountability and understanding intersectionality.

After the cohort meeting, I got the opportunity to meet with Lisa Gillette from the Office of Migrant Education (OME) and learn about their amazing work helping students from different communities. In the end, the rest of the interns and I talked about the impact the College Assistance Migrant Program (CAMP) has on us as first-year students.

I have been completing my training and classes from home. I think being virtual has its benefits, not everything is constant interruptions, my family is a daily reminder of why I want to grow professionally and be a role model; I think that makes me a good intern and student.

This week I got to see Marly. She's my cousin's dog but of course one of my best friends, so she needed to be highlighted. I was very excited to see her before going back to college. I want the few weeks that I have left at home to be about progress, learning, and family.

“There is no such thing as a single-issue struggle because we do not live single-issue lives.”

-Audre Lorde

