

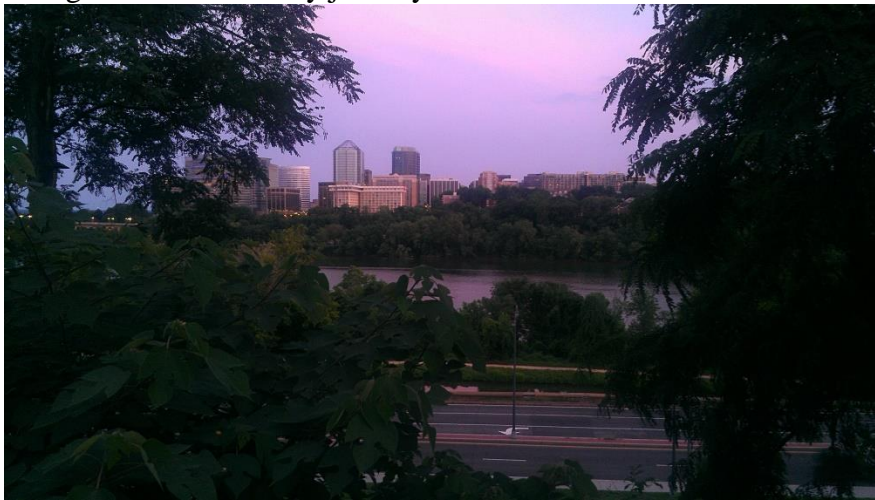
Anything you want to, do it. Want to change the world? There's nothing to it.
-Willy Wonka & The Chocolate Factory

It is truly incredible how fast time is able to fly by when you really think about it; with the 7th week of the DC internship coming to a close, I am beginning to have bittersweet feelings over the conclusion of this amazing experience. On Monday, the interns and I attended the annual CAMP Directors meeting which took place in the department of Education; I was fortunately able to take time off of work in order to attend the entire series of the conference. I remember waking up early in order to get myself extra ready for the conference in order to give a great impression; I literally shaved, washed my face, and even put on extra deodorant in order to prepare myself. Alberto and I began to walk to the Dept. of Education and after a few minutes of walking, Ariana and Samantha joined us on our walk. After getting through security, the interns walked into a conference room filled with many people; I quickly began to gaze around in order to find Amas (my director and President of CAMP) and after about 30 seconds, I spotted Amas and began to quickly walk in order to speak with him. I touched his shoulder in order to surprise him and once he saw me, we instantly hugged for a few seconds. I could not believe that I had reunited with my former director because the last time I had seen him face to face was during dead week of college which was about 2 months ago. To give a quick flashback, dead week of spring term was a stressful time for me for the reason that my four finals were pushed back to dead week and top of that, I still had to finish my homework, prepare for an Omega Delta Phi probate, and move out of my college dorm. This was a defining week of my life because it truly pushed me to the top of my limits, but to be brief, I visited Amas' office on Wednesday of dead week, but unfortunately, he was not in his office at the time. I wanted to give my goodbyes and to thank him for an amazing year and opportunity, but I decided to walk to my health class. Fortunately, as I walking to my class, I spotted Amas walking towards my direction; I quickly shook his hand and said my goodbyes. The last thing he said to me as we were saying goodbye was, "The next time we meet, it shall be in DC." Well the time finally came for us to meet once again; we spoke of how our summers had been and over various things. After about 5 minutes, all of the directors began to sit down and the interns met at a table located in the corner of the conference room. After about a few hours, the directors split up in order to take a lunch break;

I began to walk to the cafeteria and ordered a subway containing pulled pork and buffalo sauce. The line was quite long, but as I waiting, a director began to talk to me and I came to learn that her name was Martha Estrada and that she is currently a CAMP director for Northern New Mexico College. She told me how she used to intern in DC and explained to me how her experience in the internship was for her. She said that her experience was incredible for her and she even told me that she attended a Les Miserable Broadway show when visited New York City. She was an extremely humble and warm hearted person to talk to and she even paid for my meal out of kindness. After speaking with Martha for a few more minutes, I went with Alberto back to the conference room in order to eat our meals. After eating our meals, Amas took the podium and asked the interns if we would like to share a word with the directors. Samantha and Elizabeth quickly volunteered to give a word, but after a few minutes, I decided to go up as well. Elizabeth was the first to speak and it was truly incredible to hear what she said, she spoke of how during last year's fourth of July, she had been picking in the fields for the reason that her family had been struggling and she never thought in her wildest dreams that she would be celebrating the same holiday a year later in our nation's capital. When she gave her final remarks, I began to see her eyes fill with tears and in seeing that, I began to think about my family and I immediately knew what my speech would consist of. Samantha's speech was more

humorous and she told us a story of how a woman at her past job once messed up in her task and took full responsibility without any remorse. The crowd began to relax a bit and once Sam walked down, Amas asked me, "Would you like to say something?" I took a deep breath and once I was at the microphone, I introduced myself and let my heart tell my story. I spoke of my parents' struggles and how every sacrifice that they have made in their lives has not been for them but for us. I also explained how my childhood had been mostly spent with my siblings and grandmother for the reason that they would leave to work at 5 in the morning and would not return until 5 in the afternoon. I also spoke of the look that my parents had on their faces when we said our goodbyes as I walked to the terminal to board the plane going to DC. This single moment will always be imprinted in my life because if you were to look at my family in this precise moment, you would see that although they are sad, they are extremely proud for all that I have accomplished in my life. As I spoke more and more of my family, I began to choke up with tears and had to stop talking for a few seconds. I also thanked CAMP and Amas for believing in me and I wanted to let them know that this program and internship truly changes lives as it has changed mine. Once I walked down the podium, I saw Elizabeth's eyes filled with tears and we walked with another towards the back of the room and once we were alone, we hugged each other very hard with our eyes watering. We walked back to the table and the interns congratulated me on how inspiring my speech had been. When Samantha saw me, she said, "I just want to let you know that your speech was very moving and that crying does not make you any less of a man." After a few minutes of silence, Vianney called me and said "Oh Gabriel, I just want to give you a hug." We hugged and at that moment, I attempted to hold back some tears and I realized that my speech had truly moved people.

After a couple hours, the directors had all split up in order to speak with their respective State's congressmen and senators. I walked with the CAMP director for Chemeketa community college of Salem and my journey with her led us to converse with the office of Congressman



Schrader, Senator Merkley, and Senator Wyden. At about 4 pm, the meetings had ended and Amas told us that we were free to return to our dorms; upon hearing this, I walked with Diana to the Union Station Metro and upon arriving to my dorm, I cleaned my room, conversed with Elizabeth and Alberto, and finally went to sleep.

On Tuesday, the CAMP meeting had a different structure in that the second day consisted of a variety of workshops that certain directors attended. The first workshop consisted of strategies that directors can take in order to their certain CAMP programs more meaningful and impactful. Alberto, Diana, and I attended to this workshop in order to provide assistance to the directors and presenter. After about a couple of hours, I moved to another workshop where Cynthia (intern from Santa Monica) was the only other intern who provided assistance; this workshop was the most interesting to me for the reason that it revolved around strategies that

CAMP can take whenever dealing with emergencies. Once this workshop ended, Amas, Diana, and I went to eat lunch at the cafeteria...while walking, Amas introduced us to the director of the CAMP program in Columbia Basin College who this day is a dear friend to him. I could see why they were such great friends because the entire time they were, there was no lack of talking between them, they had so much to talk about such as how they met, funny moments they have lived through, and how their lives currently are. Once lunch was over, the interns split up in order to attend to their specific workshops; my next workshop regarded statistics in regards to the HEP program. After another couple hours, the final workshops of the day were going to take place...I luckily did not have to switch rooms for the reason that my final workshop was going to take place in the same room as the previous workshop. This workshop was different than the previous workshops in that the directors were to give their opinions on certain issues and to ask questions over things that they were still confused about. Around the end of the workshop, the directors asked us for further remarks that we had in regards to internship. Alberto answered first followed by Diana, at the end of Diana's talk, she began to break down in tears for the reason that she truly wants to help people and the internship truly helped her break down her barrier of fear in order to accomplish great things. Finally it was me who spoke last; I gave the directors another story regarding my family and the internship. I explained to them that I never owned any business attire in my life and when I went to purchase my business attire with the stipend that CAMP provided, the look on my mother and sister's faces were memorable when they saw me dressed in a suit for the first time in many years. I began to break down in tears once again and had to end my remarks because it was too difficult to understand my words. Once I finished talking, I told Alberto, "This happens every time"...he simply responded in saying, "Don't worry, it's all Gucci." Once the workshops were over, the interns met in front of the Dept. of Education building in order to attend a dinner that Amas was going to provide. The interns split up with Diana, Ariana, and Samantha in one group while Vianney and I were in the other. I spoke to Vianney about issues that patients must face whenever they speak with their doctors and after a few moments, I gave Vianney a hug for helping me out with an issue that I was facing in regards to a medical issue. We began to walk to L'Enfant plaza where we took the metro which would take us to Farragut West in order to attend the intern CAMP dinner that Amas was providing. It's funny because Vianney and I got off on the wrong end of the metro stop therefore, we had to scramble for a few minutes around the streets in order to figure out how to get to the restaurant. The Peruvian restaurant was filled with many interns and I even ran into a dear friend from Oregon State who goes by the name of Guillerma or Geema for short. After eating, Alberto and I were preparing to leave when Amas took Alberto aside and spoke to him about something. Once I learned what Amas was going to do for Alberto, I became extremely happy for Alberto, but I will not say in detail what it was that Amas did because I would for Alberto himself to let you all know what it was that occurred. Once dinner was over, Alberto and I returned to our dorm and we called it a night.

On Wednesday, I took an extended break from work in order to attend a meeting in the Eisenhower executive building regarding CAMP. Once the meeting was over, the interns decided to eat at a cafeteria within the building and we also purchased some souvenirs within the building. I returned to work about an hour later and when it was about 5:30 pm, I went to the house side with a couple other interns from the office in order to attend an animal event that was being hosted by an animal shelter. After holding a couple of cats, I decided to return to my dorm and to hang out with a few of the interns. Once Thursday came around, my heart began to beat anxiously for the reason that my Shadow day with Senator Merkley was going to take place today. I dressed up with a red bow tie in order to look sharp for the Senator. I am unfortunately unable to speak about what I did with the senator this day so I will just skip to the end of my work day. Once work was over, I returned to dorm and when I opened the door, I called out, "Chive!" but as I was yelling, Vianney popped out of our bathroom and was able to give me quite a good scare. We spoke with each other for a good while and then Vianney returned to her room. When midnight came around the clock, Alberto, Elizabeth, and I sneaked over to Vianney's room and when we walked in, we began to sing her Las Mañanitas; the look on her face contained traces of surprise and happiness. After speaking for a bit, we decided to hold a YouTube night and after watching videos for about a half hour, we decided to go to sleep.



Friday seemed to go at a slower pace, but the staff of the office allowed us to leave work early and as a result, I decided to take advantage of the extra hours that I had been given. When I returned to my dorm, I cleaned the room and bathroom, did the laundry, and washed the dirty dishes that we had. Once the hours were getting late, I decided to watch house of cards which was incredible to watch for the reason that the series takes in the very city that we were interning in. On Saturday, I woke up at around 8 am; for some reason, I was unable to go back to sleep so I decided to watch The Mask on my laptop and once the movie was over, I began to get hungry. I noticed that we did not have any eggs or milk; therefore, I decided to go to the local CVS pharmacy in order to purchase some breakfast supplies. When I was walking back to my dorm, I invited Vianney to eat some homemade breakfast and she was happy to join me. While I was preparing the pancake batter, she asked if there was something I needed to help with so I asked her to cut up the ham for me. While the food was cooking, she decided to put a Spanish movie that was about the typical good girl and bad boy...after a few more minutes, I explained to Vianney that I went to CVS because we had no eggs, but when I told her this, she pointed out that there was a carton of eggs on the top shelf of Alberto's side of the room. I looked and behold, there was a full carton of eggs that I did not even notice. For breakfast, we had eggs and ham with a stack of pancakes and milk and while we were eating, Vianney decided to put on the movie Zoolander. We watched another movie after Zoolander and then Vianney left the room and I decided to take a quick nap in order to get rested to go to Georgetown. I went to Georgetown in order to purchase clothes for my family, but once I was done, I returned to my

room to find that Alberto returned. He told me that a few interns were getting ready to go to an Italian restaurant where one of our friends would be mixing music. We decided to go and after staying at the restaurant for about an hour and a half, I saw that Vianney was leaving so I decided to join her. As we were walking, we decided to go eat at a local McDonalds and we spoke of a variety of things with one another. She told me about her experiences when she went to go visit her family in Mexico, what it was that she did in Europe this past year, and we even spoke of what exotic foods we come to eat in our lives. Once we returned to the dorms, we said our farewells and I returned to my room and went straight to sleep.

On Sunday, Alberto and I woke up at around 6 am in order to walk with Elizabeth to the Washington Memorial in order to grab tickets to go inside the monument itself. We waited in line for about 2.5 hours, but once we got our tickets, we went inside of the monument and took the elevator to climb up the monument. We had a gorgeous 360 degree view of the city and it was nice to see just how big of a city Washington DC truly was. Afterwards, we decided to go



visit the Holocaust museum and once we walked into the special exhibit, I felt a great sadness within myself for the reason that some of the photos regarding the holocaust were too strong to look at, but nonetheless, it was important for me to see these events in order to truly appreciate my life. Once we finished through the holocaust museum, Alberto and I decided to return to our dorm in order to have chocolate pancakes with eggs. Afterwards, we

took a long 3 hour nap in order to re-energize ourselves; once we woke up, Elizabeth invited us to go visit the Vietnam and Korean War memorials. Once we were done visiting, we returned back to our dorms where we made carne dorado, frijoles, tortillas, and some cooked chicken for Elizabeth. I could not believe that this would be my last Sunday in DC and when the realization hit me, I felt a tremble within my lips for the reason that this amazing internship was already coming to an end.