

Diana Rojas  
Week #1

### My Wildest Dream Came True!

My name is Diana Rojas, as I am sure you already know. I am a rising sophomore at Oregon State University majoring in Philosophy. I believe my life purpose is to advocate for single mothers, orphans, and the defenseless. I also believe that being a civil rights lawyer will allow me the opportunity to do so. I am very grateful to have been selected as one of this year's 2014 HEP/CAMP interns. I know this internship will be a great asset to prepare me for the future. I feel so blessed to have gotten this opportunity and I want the people that could not be here to come along on this journey. Therefore, I will use this journal to write about my experiences, so I hope you enjoy reading about OUR trip because it's not only mine but all of ours ☺

Wow! I still cannot believe I am in Washington DC, much less that I have been here a whole week! This is so surreal! Never in my wildest dream did I imagine myself here! It seems like just yesterday I was cleaning my dorm and packing my stuff, ready to board the plane to head to the other side of the states. Now I am here! It is definitely dream come true.

As the plane was preparing to land my heart was beating so fast. I had so many emotions and could not contain myself! I wanted to scream and shout to everyone in the plane how excited yet how scared I was, but did not have the courage to do so. The landing seemed like an eternity, but I very much enjoyed the view! I could not believe I was about to land in the capital of the United States. As I finally landed, I was greeted by the nicest guy ever! Patrick was so attentive and made me feel welcomed right away. He then walked me over to where most of the other interns were, they all welcomed me and we all instantly clicked as if we had been friends already. It was an awesome feeling knowing I was not going to be alone in this new city. That night we all settled in to our dorms and I got to know my roommate.



This is the amazing Patrick Doone. On his last afternoon with us, we went to a Peruvian place to eat. As you can see, I became really attached to him! He certainly made an impact in my life! On the top right is a group picture at "El Chalan", a Peruvian restaurant. On the bottom right is a picture of Betsy, Patrick's wife, Patrick, and me. They are both awesome!!!!



I forgot to mention... We were greeted with awesome weather! As we were approaching the doors to step outside, you could feel this immense heat blowing in, it was beyond crazy! I had never been exposed to this type of weather before. I was told before arriving that there would be a lot of humidity; but I had no idea how intense it was going to be. So when we finally arrived in our dorms it was awesome to be an air-conditioned room. However, after a while our room was freezing and my roommate and I did not know how to turn off the AC. We were forced to sleep with it on, and gosh was it cold! That night was the coldest night of my life! No joke!

The following days were spent discovering DC, and getting to know other interns who were not HEP/CAMP interns. The days were packed with so much to do and kept us busy, busy, busy! We were in training with people from the Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute (CHCI). They are all two to three years older than us, and although that's not that much older, they made me feel like a baby. I couldn't believe that some of them gave up grad school to be here, and we were just done with or freshman year and already doing this! I felt honored and maybe even a bit prideful for a bit.

After a few days of training Patrick took us to meet Arturo Rodriguez, the president of the United Farmworkers of America. We thought we were only going to meet with him and get to know him a bit, but to our surprise we had something else in store for us. To begin with, we walked in to a church to meet him, which to me was a bit odd, but I did not care, I was going to meet Arturo Rodriguez!! When we entered the church, there were a lot of people preparing for what was about to take place- a rally for Immigration Reform. The place was filled with a diverse group from all over the States, and you could feel the energy right away! After an hour or so, we all walked together as a group to the House Office building. Activism is one of my biggest passions so being involved in something like this in DC was amazing and made me feel even more empowered! Some of my fellow interns were even on Univision, and you can see my hand holding a camera.



To the left:  
Arturo  
Rodriguez

To the  
right: Me  
standing in  
front of the  
capital...  
we were  
on our way  
to the  
House of  
Reps.



The following day we got to go around and meet the offices were we are placed. It was awesome because everyone was so friendly and welcoming. I was very scared before meeting the people I was going to be working with, but after meeting them, I was sure I was going to be fine! The interns I will be working with and my supervisor seem really outgoing, and offered their assistance with whatever I needed. I was introduced to some of the topics/projects I will be working on as well, and they seem very interesting, so I am really excited to start my internship. We also visited Representative Ruben Hinojosa's office and got to sit in his chair! Unfortunately, we did not get to meet him, but it was still really cool to sit in his chair and look around his office.

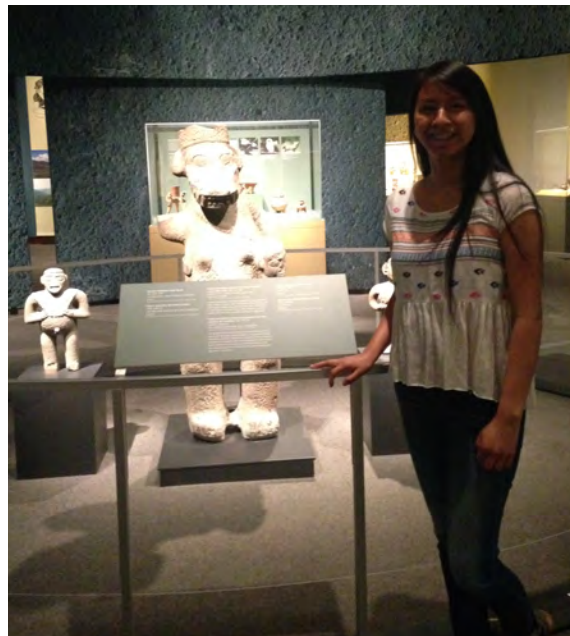


This was inside Congressman Ruben Hinojosa's office. It was so cool!!

On Friday, we woke up extra early to get our pictures taken. This would also be the last day Patrick would be in DC, so it was a very sad day. Since our group was the last one to get their pictures taken, we were just chilling outside of the capital, no big deal! Haha I'm kidding; it was pretty cool to sit outside of the Capital steps for a good chunk of time. Before it was our turn to take our picture, Patrick had to leave. We all gave him a hug, and saw him as he walked away. Just like every day after he left us, I felt like he was going to come back the next day. Or so that's what I wanted to believe because like I already stated, he is such an incredible man. More like a father figure I say.



To conclude our week and our last week of orientation we decided to go visit some of the museums. Before heading to them, I decided to go to church. It was a good thirty minute walk. As I walked through the city, I got to enjoy the nice scenery. This city has some huge beautiful building! After church I met up with the rest of the interns, but before that... I got lost for about two hours on the metro. I kept getting on the wrong metro, but I didn't mind because I got to explore even more of what DC has to offer and got to meet new people along the way. Finally, when I found my way around I met up with the rest of the interns and visited the National Museum of the American Indian.



The first picture is of the outside of the Museum, and the other two are of inside the museum.



That was the end of my first week!

