

Bianca Chavez
HEP/CAMP Intern 2017
Washington State University
Congresswoman Michelle Lujan Grisham

Day Zero: Prior to my arrival in D.C

Am I really in Washington D.C. right now? It seems like just yesterday I received the news from my advisor that I was nominated for the HEP/CAMP internship. I felt honored but at the same time apprehensive that my CAMP family would regret their decision. A few times I questioned, “why me?” but eventually began asking myself, “why NOT me?” I did not fear rejection but feared that because of me, none of my peers would get the opportunity to apply. I put my best effort into the application and when I received the amazing news that I was chosen; I was speechless. I could not believe that I was going to be an intern on Capitol Hill. This was another opportunity for me to advocate on behalf of my community. I was interviewed by my university’s press and my hometown’s local T.V. news station. Everyone was talking about my selection and it was a privilege to serve as a model to demonstrate that someone like me could be interning for a congresswoman.



Day Two: Saturday, June 10th



The day was finally here. I left my house at 3am with my mother. It was too early to wake my brothers so I kissed them goodbye as they slept. I am very close with one of my younger brothers and I couldn’t resist but to wake him up and let him know that I was off to the airport. Normally he travels with me but I could not take him this time. I was excited and nervous because this was the first time on an airplane alone. Once I arrived, I was glad to meet the interns in person. Luckily we had all connected on social media and via email. Patrick (A CAMP director from Florida) was waiting for us at the airport and showed us where we’d be staying for the next 8 weeks. After settling in we went dinner then a walk; before I knew it I was standing outside the White House.

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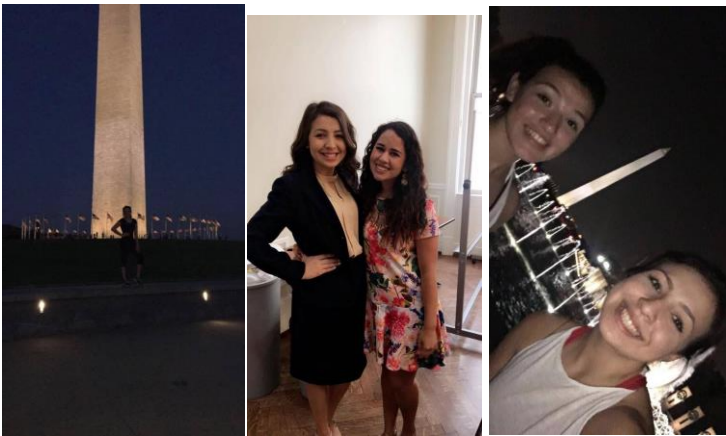
Day Two: Sunday, June 11th

Patrick took us on an adventure and shared many stories and showed us how to survive D.C. He taught us how to get to our offices and other popular places in the area. I was fascinated with everything, including riding the metro. It was my first time in a city like D.C. and my first time seeing a metro. I was even impressed by their pretty Walmart where we went Grocery shopping. That night the intern and I went on the metro by ourselves to Walgreens and we all jogged back home through parts of the National Mall.



Day Three: Monday, June 12th

It was my first day of CHCI orientation (Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute). The sessions, alumni, staff and key speakers were great. I received training on networking and enjoyed hearing tips and success stories of from other Latinx. That night again, Gloria (one of the other interns) and I jogged through the National Mall, I could not believe that people casually jogged next to the memorials. I was starting to fall in love with D.C.



Day Four: Tuesday, June 13th

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By this time, I had made friends with a few CHCI interns and it was really nice getting to know them. We all came from different states and backgrounds but shared plenty in common. We received training on Public Speaking, Media, and the Capitol Hill Culture. After Orientation I went to my first baseball game. We watched the Nationals play and a few of us got matching t-shirts.



Day Five: Wednesday, June 14th



This time, the CHCI has holding their first part of orientation in the Library of Congress. This is where we received training on Congressional Research Services. Then we returned to the CHCI building to get training on Legislative writing. One of the many reasons I liked the trainings were because the presenters were interactive. Later that evening, the Interns and I decided to surprise Patrick with a home cooked meal in appreciation of all his hard work. However, when we were cooking we accidentally made the fire alarm go off. It went on for what seemed like forever until finally someone came to assist us and turned it off. We pulled in tables and chairs from the other rooms and had dinner.

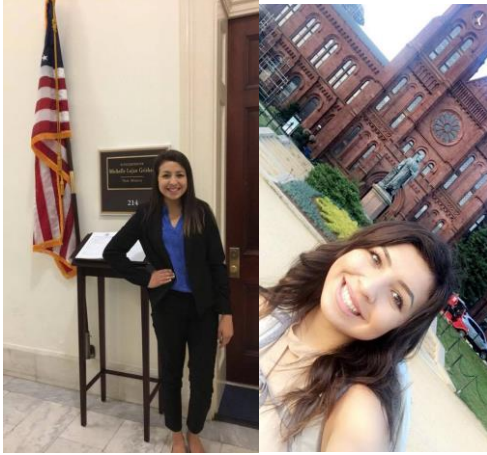
Day Six: Thursday, June 15th

After orientation, we attended the Tri-Caucus Reception. It was time to put my networking skills into practice. Before doing so I took a moment to soak in the environment. I was wearing business formal attire and everything around me was elegant. I began to network and I met so many people. A gentleman I met, shared many scholarships, fellowships and internships for me to look into. I also was introduced to a young woman from my State. Additionally, I had the opportunity to meet the interns that I would be working with in the office of congresswomen Michelle Lujan Grisham.



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Day Seven: Friday, June 16th



Patrick was very kind to set up meetings all day for the HEP/CAMP interns. First, we met with the United Farm Workers Association and all of our individual offices we were interning for. I appreciated the opportunity to meet with my supervisor before starting. I was able to talk to her, ask questions, and see the office. We also met with every other office of our interns were with. This meant that we met with Congress's offices (including the House and the Senate), and the Office of Migrant Education. It was a privilege to meet with them and I learned something from every one of them. We also got to see Bernie Sanders' office so that was pretty cool!