

Lupe Perales

Week One - Introduction to a New World

My journey began the day I decided to depart to Washington D.C. Leaving my family was hard, but I knew that it was all going to be worth it at the end. Upon my arrival to D.C., I received the opportunity to meet an amazing and unique individual. This individual impacted my life in so many ways that brought tears to my eyes the day that he left. This man is Patrick Doone, our Internship Coordinator. He was the individual who introduced my peers and I to this New World, Washington D.C. Patrick Doone taught us so many things in such a short time. From using the metro, to eating flowers. He always motivated me to push myself to excel. His support was unconditional. Without his help, I would have lost myself in this enormous and beautiful city.



This amazing man in the dark blue shirt is Patrick Doone!

After a weekend of attempting to settle into our dorms, it was time to take out our notebooks and prepare for orientation week. During orientation week, we were introduced to political language. Language that was new to me. We also met with very important individuals that have influenced my life in positive ways. Individuals that are knowledgeable about what it means to work on Capitol Hill, know how to motivate people, possess strong writing skills, a huge network support system, and many more outstanding proficiencies. The amazing people that we have met have spent time with us to prepare us to stand out from the rest of the interns in the offices that we have been assigned to. The best part of the experience was meeting the Alumni Panel. Each alumni gave us advice and encouraged us all to network as much as possible. They mentioned that the connections that we make now will be very beneficial to us in the future. The Alumni Panel motivated us to strive to become the people we DREAM to become. One day, I hope to receive an invitation to be a part of the Alumni Panel to share my own experiences. I wish to share what I have learned to incoming interns and possibly influence their lives like they have impacted mine.



Received the opportunity to meet with individuals like Giev Kashkooli, Irene Bueno, and Gilberto Cisneros who support our Farmworkers and Hispanic college students like myself.

During orientation, I had the opportunity to attend the Tri-Caucus Reception. At first, it was nerve wrecking to be amongst individuals that I did not know. I knew I wanted to meet them and put to practice my newly acquired networking skills that I learned and practice what the Alumni Panel had recommended, but I was too terrified. I kept telling myself that I had to step out of my comfort zone and just put myself out there. Before I was able to, it was time to eat. I was too nervous and too hungry. So I decided to eat a little of everything. While I was gathering some food, I started to make small conversations. I noticed that there was a flower in the middle of the dish and I decided to take it with me. The purple flower appealed most to me because it seemed similar to the flowers that I learned were edible. I continued with my small plate of food and took it to the table where my peers and Intern Coordinator, Patrick Doone were sitting. When I arrived at the table, I asked Patrick if the flower was edible and he responded with a “yes” and therefore I went ahead and ate it. Everyone at the table was surprised that I ate the flower and they decided to video record my flower eating experience. When a server passed by with a plate of fried shrimp, one of the intern from our table stopped him and asked to grab a couple. While the server was at our table I asked whether the flower was edible or not. He looked at me, smiled, and responded with a “no.” When he said that, I became scared and looked at Patrick. Patrick and the rest of the interns at the table started laughing. I started laughing too because I could not believe what had just happened. Patrick, being the kind man that he is turned to his phone and searched the flower. Google stated that the flower was edible and at that moment my fear went away. At that moment, I trusted Google more than the server. Memories like these, have made my first few days in Washington D.C. unforgettable.



Purple flower and CEO Domenika Lynch at the Tri-Caucus Reception!

Throughout the week, we were able to cook dinner for Patrick Doone. We decided to cook rice, beans, and chicken fajitas for him. We went to the store and bought all of the ingredients that we needed for our meal. I cooked the beans and was in the process of making the rice when the fire alarm went off. The alarm went off because we allowed the rice to fry too much and when adding water, the steam developed caused the alarm to trigger. The alarm was so loud it hurt my ears. It rang for about 10 to 15 minutes that the police arrived and asked, "What did you guys burn?" I wanted to laugh so hard, but I could not because I was scared at the same time. My peers and I just responded, "Rice." They documented the name of the individual's dorm and turned off the alarm. Our dinner preparation was the funniest and most embarrassing thing that happened to us. After the scene that we caused, we returned to finish our cooking of the chicken fajitas. All of this chaos was well worth it because we were able to surprise Patrick with some delicious dinner that we all enjoyed. While at the table we shared with him what had happened, and we all laughed. Going through all of the dinner preparation chaos was well worth it because we were able to give our Intern Coordinator a little token of appreciation for all that he has provided for us as we prepare to take on such an amazing internship opportunity in Washington D.C.



Attempting to cook for Patrick Doone was a challenge, but totally worth it!

So far, Washington D.C. has exposed me to many new things that I would never have imagined doing. I have met so many important and incredible people who love to help people unconditionally. They have motivated me to strive to be like them. My dream is to give back to

my community, and my family just how they are. I am grateful for the many opportunities that are offered to me while in Washington D.C. that must be taken advantage of. I am going to have to learn to step out of my comfort zone completely so that I can make the most out of this experience. Success will depend on the people I will come to know and strong network systems that I will develop. I am ready to grow as an individual and represent my community, Michigan State University and my family who are the reason why I am here today, standing in Washington D.C. I am appreciative to be a part of a university and the C.A.M.P. program because they have provided so much support and exceptional life opportunities. Opportunities that help me get one step closer to realizing my DREAM!



New places, new adventures!

