

Carlos Vazquez
DC Journal Week 4

It is really crazy to think that I am already in my fourth week here in Washington D.C. I always knew that once the 4th of July hit, then everything after that would be go by in a flash. A month from now I will already be back at home but until then, I still have plenty of time to leave my mark in this amazing city. While it is upsetting to think about how fast time is creeping up on me and that soon I will no longer be with all of my new friends, I am looking forward to all of the adventures that are to be made.

Often times, the adventures that I speak of aren't major events that are expensive or required traveling but typically they consist of times that are simple yet memorable. For example, on Sunday night I will remember the bonding session we had at night where we were all working on our journals but were often distracted by singing Banda songs on YouTube. The next day I had a lunch meeting scheduled with Dr. Lisa Ramirez, the Director of Office of Migrant Education and also the Office of School Support and Rural Programs. This meeting was one of the highlights of my time in the office because I was able to have the one on one interaction with someone who I truly admire. I was really in awe because she really has accomplished so much that I hope to one day achieve but not only that, it's amazing to see the humbleness reflect in her character. I was able to take something away from the meeting both professionally and also values that I can apply in my daily life.

After work, Lisa let us leave a little early so that Jose and I could go visit the Museum of National Archives. I was really excited because this was one of the museums that I was really excited to go to because I do have an interest in history and the museum contains so many documents that have completely shaped this nation. Considering it was the day before the 4th of July, the city was busier than ever meaning that the museum was absolutely filled. Although the people made it a little difficult to enjoy, I still was in disbelief that I was standing under the original Declaration of Independence and the Constitution. Aside from the museums, an interesting little thing that I keep coming across in my time here in D.C. is the fact that there are so many delicious cupcakes everywhere! I was able to get some cupcakes with the CHCI after work and I came up with a theory that "Washington D.C." actually stands for "Washington Delicious Cupcakes."

Once Tuesday came around, I woke up a little more excited than usual because this is the day that I had marked on my calendar since coming to Washington D.C, the 4th of July had finally arrived. The first thing we did was all gather and go to the parade, while I had always envisioned that this parade would have been phenomenal and completely unforgettable because we were in the nation's capital. I quickly realized that it was just a regular parade that most cities would host during that national holiday. Throughout the rest of the day, it was very hot and I was very tired so it was difficult to stay in that holiday spirit, but once night time came around; finally the spirit hit me once again. The CHCI cohort and I were all fortunate enough to view the 4th of July night concert in front of the Capitol building. That was overall an amazing experience because the entire time I was in disbelief at the fact that I was actually watching a major event and the fireworks with my new found close friends in such a historic location. Overall, this night was one that I don't believe I will ever forget.

What amazes me is that so many events have already taken place and we were barely reaching the half point of the week! The rest of the week included many memorable experiences as well, such as getting a tour from our fellow intern, Bianca Chavez, of the inside of the Capitol. I always thought the building looked really pretty from the outside but once you go in and get to see all that it provides from within, it really makes you almost appreciate just how much was put into it. I thought it was really neat to sit inside of the Senate Chamber; it took me awhile to actually believe that I was in the legitimate Chamber because I had seen it so many times in history books and through the TV screens but to think that I was sitting there was very surreal. At the end of the day, our supervisor Tara Ramsey invited us and the rest of the HEP/CAMP interns to her apartment for dinner. While I thought it was a really kind gesture to invite us all too her home, I was blown away just how kindly she had treated each and every one of us. To think that somebody would put in all this effort to basically spoil us with so much food and just complete hospitality really made me appreciate just the type of character that she is and what I can do in the future for similar situations.

On Friday, I was very pleased that we had yet another special program planned for our CHCI day. We started off by going to tour and speak with some employees at the Organization of American States (OAS). The OAS is a beautifully structured building where 35 independent states in the Americas meet to maintain solidarity and cooperation with one another. After we left the OAS, the HEP/CAMP interns had a lunch meeting with Irene Bueno at the NVG, where we were surprised with a group phone call with Patrick Doone. It was so great to catch up with Patrick, since many of us had not reached out to him since the first week of our internship. All in all, Week 4 was most likely the most memorable week of my time here. While I am saving my weekend stories for Week 5, I can still gladly say that every bit of my journey here has been something that is completely shaping my business and personal ideas in more ways than I could imagine.



