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July 3, 2017 - July 9, 2017

This fourth week in DC has been an emotional roller coaster for me.

Monday was a usual day at work. However, Tuesday we did not work because it was the 4th of July. Because the previous Saturday I had been to the National Museum of the American Indian, a lot of the information I read at the museum was still fresh in my mind. It had not hit me I was in DC and to be honest I sometimes think it is not actually happening. With everything the US has done both good and bad, and I'm here; in the middle of it all. I'm having very mixed emotions and have really been having deep conversations with myself and with my fellow interns.

With everything going on with the administration, with everything the current President has said. What are the odds of me being here. I am a first generation Mexican American pursuing a degree in Mechanical Engineering doing an internship in Washington, DC. I have hopes of one day becoming an astronaut, and to top it all of I am a women. It seems like everything has been against me and especially right now. Yet I don't see it in a negative way. I think I grew accustomed to struggling and to me life isn't life without struggling. I would certainly not be here without every single hurdle that has appeared in my way. It is very difficult to put into words everything that I'm feeling at this moment. It truly simply feels like a dream.

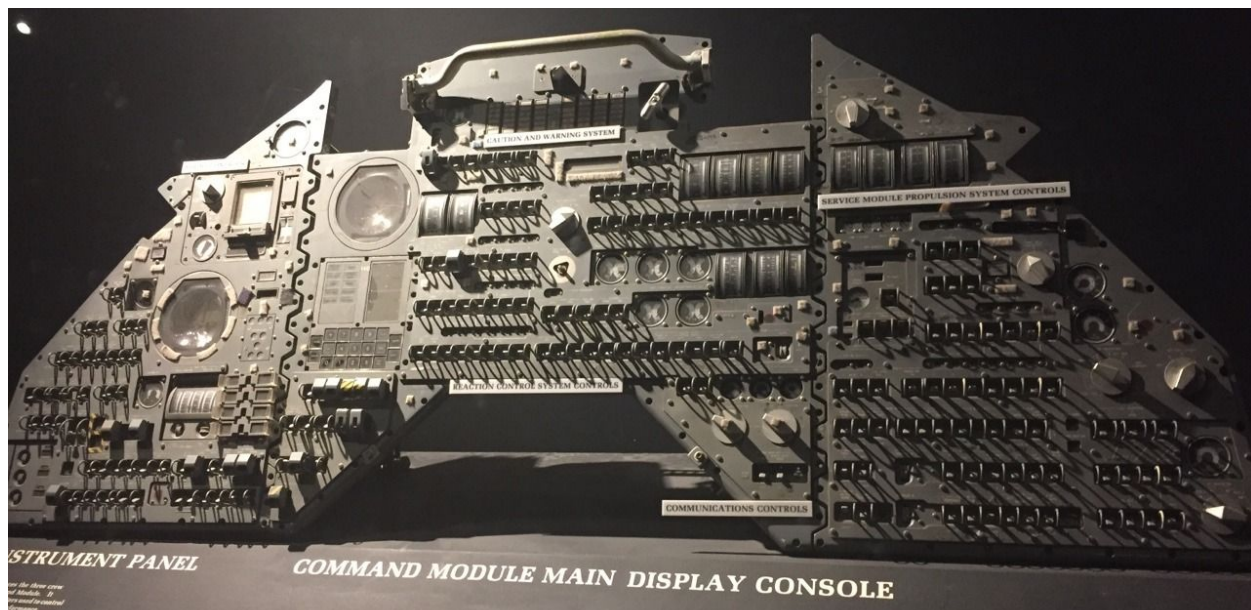
I have overcome so much and I'm in DC now. I remember being in first grade and feeling like my life was falling apart because I would have to repeat the grade for not being proficient in English. Since I can remember I've had this hunger for knowledge and being in DC has only made me more ambitious. In addition to examining those feelings, I also attend the parade on the 4th. I was very happy to see different cultures represented. America is not just white. Every single person no matter where they come from contributes to the greatness of this country.



Thursday evening I attended a very exciting talk. The talk was named STEM Policy Panel-Latinx on The Hill. Since I am a STEM major, I thought it would be a great opportunity to meet other people interested in STEM in the Washington DC area. I got to meet the new CEO of the Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers (SHPE). I was a little starstruck since I am part of SHPE at CSULB. I had a brief conversation with her and she talked about the connection between law and STEM closely related they really are. I have always had very strong feelings regarding what seems like an absence of science when making decisions in government. When she brought it up I was very surprised and agreed with her. I also realized we have the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology which I had no idea existed!



I also visited the National Air and Space Museum again. This time I walked around the second floor and was able to see some of the things aboard the Apollo 11. It does not stop amazing me how far we have come. I hope to one day be a part of NASA and have something I designed or help build on display at the museum. I saw the Command Module Main Display Console and it made me think I should start studying all of those buttons so I'm ready when NASA gives me the call.



Friday was amazing!  
We gathered with CHCI at the Organization of American States (OAS), which I had no idea existed either! It is a beautiful building and with an even more striking purpose. The patio in the inside really made me feel at home. It is crazy to think all the 34 active American countries come together in that very building to discuss. It also made me think of the fact many people forget the entire continent is America. For some reason we think of the US when we describe someone as American. The reality is Guatemala, Brazil, Mexico, Cuba, Chile, Costa Rica, etc. are all America as well! I could not stop looking at the flags, I think it's such a powerful statement to have them all displayed together.

