

Monserrath Sanchez  
HEP/CAMP Journal  
Week 1

I have been in Washington D.C. for a week now, and I have learned and experienced so much within this first week. I still remember when my CAMP Director, Ofelia Gámez notified me that I had been accepted to this internship. If someone would have told me that I would be part of an internship in Washington D.C., I would have never believed them. I am truly grateful for this amazing opportunity that has been handed to me through the HEP/CAMP Association.

**Sunday May 22, 2016:** I arrived to the Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport at around 5:20 p.m. after two very long flights. I still remember how sad and excited I felt as I passed through the airport security check-in, I was leaving my family for a very long time for the first time. Although I was leaving them, I knew this opportunity would make a huge impact on me as a young professional. As soon as I got off of the plane Patrick Doone was already waiting for me. When I saw him I was excited because I was finally able to meet him and I knew that I was in good hands. Once everyone arrived we headed down to Munson Hall in The George Washington University (GW). On our first night here Patrick took all of the interns out to have dinner at Bertucci's an Italian restaurant. During dinner I was able to get to know the other interns: Aleya Garcia, Crystal Gallegos, Jasmine Meraz, and Jose Flores. We all come from a different part of the nation, but we all have the same desire to become successful and make our families proud. After dinner, Patrick gave us a lot of brochures and maps that showed us a map of the entire city and how to maneuver through the metro. That night we also received our business cards, I'm not going to lie I was pretty excited that we were going to have our business cards! We then headed back to the dorms and I immediately fell asleep, I had an extreme case of jet lag!

**Monday May 23, 2016:** Today we started our orientation with the Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute (CHCI). To get to the orientation site we rode the metro for the very first time. It was not as bad as I had expected, well I guess that's only because Patrick was guiding us how to get through and where to get off. One very interesting thing I saw on the metro was a man got stuck in between the doors, so he was told to get off. Although he was having trouble getting through and he ended up falling onto the boarding platform and his shoe flew off. When I saw that I just thought, "I really hope that never happens to me". During the CHCI orientation we had guest speakers although the one that stood out to me the most was Cristina Antelo, The CHCI Interim President and CEO, she was so inspiring to me as a young Latina. Christina repeatedly mentioned to never compare ourselves with others, and said, "Everyone has their own Latino story", when she said that I immediately realized that she was right and that I should never compare myself with others. Throughout the first day of orientation we (The HEP/CAMP Interns) were able to interact with the rest of the CHCI Interns. They were very welcoming and really wanted to get to know us. Once the orientation was over for the day, we realized that the CHCI Interns had walked to the orientation, so we asked if we could tag along and walked back to Munson Hall. For dinner that night my roommate Crystal and I went to El Chalan, a Peruvian restaurant. We both ordered the same dish which consisted of rice and beans with shrimp served with a creamy sauce. After dinner we headed back to Munson Hall, and asked Jose, Aleya, and Jasmine if they wanted to head down to the White House. Unfortunately, Jasmine was not able to make it because she had homework to finish and was preparing her lunch for the following day at work (her internship started before ours, so she will not be in the

orientations with us). When I saw the White House I was in awe, I could not believe that I had returned after so many years, but this time it was for an internship instead of a field trip.



**Tuesday May 24, 2016:** Today we walked to the CHCI orientation site with the rest of the interns. It was a very beautiful walk; I was able to embrace more nature than I would have if we would have taken the metro. The speaker that really inspired me today was William Gill the Senior Vice President of CHCI, he was telling us that we should be the interns that anyone wants. He stated, “Be the intern that arrives early, asks for more work, does every task with a positive attitude, and the intern that is making the most out of the opportunity they have. Today we also had a Congressional Simulation, which was kind of eye opening. I never really thought about how much needs to be done when Congressmen and women are voting for a certain bill to be passed. It was just made got me pumped up to learn the most I can while I am out here in D.C. Today we also went to Shake Shack, I really wanted to compare it to In-N-Out, and all I can say is the only thing Shake Shack does better are the milkshakes.



**Wednesday May 25, 2016:** On Wednesday morning it was take Jasmine to work day. After we dropped her off at Senator Merkley’s office in the Hart Senate Office Building, we headed down to the Dirksen Café inside the Dirksen Senate Office Building. We all grabbed something light for breakfast and told Patrick how our orientation week has gone so far. After breakfast we went down to The Library of Congress to complete our Congressional Research Service training. I really enjoyed that training, the instructor Mrs. Patrice George was very kind and made the workshop as interactive as she could. She made sure we knew the basics of the Congressional Research Service, which are: they have no mission statement and they work exclusively for congress. Mrs. George was also super encouraging she told all of the interns during the training that she had faith in us. Mrs. George said two things that really caught my attention, the first was: “You are the eyes and ears of the U.S. Congress because of the

constituents” and the other was: “Being a Congressional Intern is a gift that keeps on giving”. After she said that I really reflected on the opportunities I have and I realized that Mrs. George was right. After the workshop we were able to go grab some lunch and then head down to Dupont Circle for our next workshop which was on public speaking. The public speaking workshop was awesome. It allowed me to get out of my comfort zone and I really enjoyed all of the activities we did. One of the activities we did was the “confidence pose” in which we had to choose a certain pose such as how Wonder Woman or Superman pose and hold it for three minutes while playing an upbeat song. All in all, this workshop helped me become more confident about being a Congressional Intern in The House of Representatives. We then walked back to our dorms and took a small nap, and agreed to meet Patrick so he could show us where the nearest church was at and how to get to Trader Joe’s. That night we all had our first home cooked dinner, we all participated in the cooking and had more time to bond. Aleysa and I made rice, while Jose marinated chicken and Crystal cooked the chicken. I thought that it was very good for our first try and it was fun because it felt like we started to become a family.



**Thursday May 26, 2016:** Today was our own HEP/CAMP Orientation day. Like yesterday we took Jasmine to work and then headed to Senator Schumer’s office where Jose will be doing his internship. Once he met his supervisor, we then headed down to Longworth House Office Building where I will be completing my internship with Congressman Xavier Becerra. I was able to meet my supervisor Ms. Rivas and she made me feel welcomed into the office she introduced me to other staff and interns. Although, my favorite part was being able to go inside Congressman Becerra’s personal office. As soon as I entered his office it felt like home, Congressman Becerra had a lot of beautiful artwork that showed how proud he is of his Mexican roots and how humble he truly is. We then headed to Longworth Cafeteria to grab a snack, as we ate we told Patrick about how our first attempt at cooking went. Once we were done we headed down to the Department of Education where Aleysa will be interning with The White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanics. Her supervisor is Mr. Emmanuel Caudillo, he told us a lot of information that I did not know before, like how the program has been around for more than 25 years. At around 1:30 p.m. we had lunch with Irene Bueno, she told all of us how she came to represent the HEP/CAMP Association on The Hill. She also gave us a lot of insights about the D.C. life and what she highly encourages us to do while in Washington D.C. After

lunch with Irene we headed back to The Department of Education, but this time we went to the Office of Migrant Education where Crystal will complete her internship. What was fun about that meeting was being able to have our meeting inside the conference room of the Secretary of Education and the delicious cookies the staff of Office of Migrant Education gave us. Once the meeting was over that completed our orientation for the day and we headed back to Munson Hall to take a nap before we headed down to Chinatown. In Chinatown we had dinner with Patrick and it was just a delicious meal and we all shared a bit of our food with each other. We walked through Chinatown and decide to walk back to Munson Hall and so we ended up walking past the White House again and took picture



**Friday May 27, 2016:** On Friday morning we had our pictures taken inside Rotunda of the Cannon Office Building. After our pictures we headed back to Dupont Circle for our workshop sessions. Mark Lopez from the Pew Research Center presented and he knew a lot of information about Hispanic and Latinos within the United States. It was super impressive how he just knew a lot of stuff out of the top of his head. Once the orientation was done we headed back to our rooms and relaxed for a bit and waited for Jasmine to arrive from work. Later on we headed down to Georgetown and walked around until we got to Georgetown Cupcakes! The cupcakes were just amazing like they came straight down from heaven. We noticed how close Georgetown University was and decided to walk to it, although we did not expect it to be such a tiring walk. Once we got to The Georgetown University, Jose decided to give us a “tour” around the university it was super funny! I enjoyed looking around the university, it just had beautiful buildings and it literally took my breathe away. We headed down back towards Munson Hall and simply enjoyed our start of the weekend.



**Saturday May 28, 2016:** We decided to have breakfast together so we all started to make breakfast at around 10:15. We made breakfast sandwiches and burritos and had smoothies as well. We then walked towards the National Mall to go meet up with Patrick. On our way over there we saw a ton of bikers getting ready for Memorial Day weekend. We found Patrick and started our journey to go see as many monuments as we could. It was a super-hot day so we definitely needed to take a break and sit under some shade. Once we felt a little rested we went to the Smithsonian Air and Space Museum and it was awesome not just because there was an AC in there but because it just has a bunch of cool aircrafts! It honestly has so much to see but I think I was able to see most of it. Once we met up again with Patrick I could tell that we were all extremely worn out. Patrick told us to get some rest and that he would meet us at El Chalan for dinner. I honestly think that by dinner on Saturday night, you could really tell how close we had gotten with each other. It was really sad when Patrick walked us back to our rooms because I had gotten close to him and it was his last day with us.





**Sunday May 29, 2016:** I slept in today and it felt good because I really needed to catch up on sleep. We met up with each other like at 12:00, I think and headed down to the Pentagon City Mall. We all needed to get something for work the following week, so we enjoyed our time shopping. I promise I did not go on a huge shopping spree.... Once we finished we were super hungry so we grabbed something to eat. We came back to Munson Hall and had time to finish any work we needed to finish. I cleaned up the room and prepared my stuff for my first day at work next week. We really needed to go to Target, so later on the day we headed down towards the metro to get to Target. When we left it was started to rain a bit, so we hurried towards the metro to just make it back to our rooms. Once we got back we started to cook our signature dish of rice with chicken. We watched a movie online together and had a great time.