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Internship: Center on Budget and Policy Priorities

An Unforgettable Experience: Washington D.C.

Applying to the UCDC program seemed like the natural next step in my academic career. After studying political science and public policy in the classroom for two years, I was ready to apply what I had learned in real life. I arrived in Washington D.C. prepared for a short internship, but I left with far more than just work experience to put on my resume. During my time at the Nation's Capital, I not only learned about the federal budgetary process and significant policies like the Farm Bill and unemployment benefits, but also discovered myself, my own political values, and my aspirations.

During my time in Washington D.C., I interned at the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities (CBPP), a non-profit think-tank that analyzes how state and federal budgetary and fiscal policies affect low- and middle-income populations and promotes sound policy that reduces poverty and inequality. As the federal legislative intern, I tracked legislation through Congress, drafted memos and talking points on various policy issues, like the wealth gap, and closely followed the fiscal deficit debate surrounding Sequestration and the Fiscal Cliff. I also attended a number of policy events, from Brookings Institution forums to briefings at Capitol Hill, and wrote event summaries for CBPP staff. For someone who had only engaged in policy work in an academic setting, being at the heart of policy creation and contributing to it in some small way was an unforgettable experience.

D.C. was where I discovered that policy work is more than just an interest or job; it is personal and passionate. Embedded in policy, at the very core, are basic values and principles about what kind of a country we aspire to be. For those at CBPP, their work was not just a matter of occupation, but a daily commitment to the ideas of equal opportunity and equity. Working at CBPP made me reevaluate why I was interested in policy and reminded me of the real-life consequences of policy decisions.

The Capital also presented numerous opportunities for growth and adventure outside of the internship. Every night consisted of a run around the Washington Monument and Lincoln Memorial, and every weekend was spent in some museum or at a cultural event. While my time in D.C. was only four short months, the knowledge and experience I gained while there is immeasurable. I am currently living in the Bay Area and working at the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency as part of the City Hall Fellows program. The experience I had in D.C. has undoubtedly helped get me to where I am today. I am incredibly appreciative of the support from the Center on Civility & Democratic Engagement – thank you for helping make my UCDC experience possible.