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Washington, D.C. through the “Live. Learn. Intern” Program

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Andrew Waetzig

Washington, D.C. through the “Live. Learn. Intern” Program

My fall semester in Washington, D.C. was an invaluable experience. Studying at George Mason University, interning at the Association for Enterprise Opportunity, and living in our nation’s capitol for four months was one of my most amazing semesters. The Fund for American Studies planned many trips such as visits to Mount Vernon, a Nationals game, and a 2-day tour of the Newseum. Also, the program allowed us to talk to various people in trips to the World Bank, Pentagon, and State Department. Finally, we even went to learn about and see a documentary on indigenous Australian art at the Australian Embassy. Overall, studying, interning, and living in D.C. was an amazing experience.

George Mason University is a completely different college experience than the one I had experienced through Linfield my freshman and sophomore years. The main campus is enormous compared to Linfield, and there were a lot more students. However, most of our classes met at the Arlington campus in Virginia, which was a lot closer to D.C. and made the commute easier. In my Internship Seminar Class, I learned a lot about how Washington, D.C. really works from Professor Karen Czarnecki, who has worked in Washington, D.C. for 20 years, including working in the White House for two Presidents. Her perspective on D.C. and how it works was unique. It provided me with an excellent class complete with numerous guest speakers from organizations around the D.C. area. In the second half of the Internship Seminar Class, Professor Richard Benedetto taught on journalism in D.C. Professor Benedetto worked as a White House correspondent for *USA Today* and

was a reporter in D.C. for nearly 40 years. His lifetime of experience brought incredible insight on how the media has changed drastically over the years and has strayed away from its job of just letting the public know what's happening in D.C. In more recent years, a lot of opinion has infiltrated the media, which cuts the actual reporting on the stories short, making room for more debate and opinion. In my government class, "Constitutional Interpretation," Professor John Samples taught us about the different interpretations people take, making sure to cover the pros and cons of each. From original intent to Federalist the class covered a lot of different clauses and the controversies that arise through the various forms of interpretations. Professor Samples combined his unique personality with his experience at the CATO Institute, where he directs the "Center for Representative Government" department, to make for an interesting class. Finally, in the "Economics of Public Policy" class, economic theory was applied to controversial issues, specifically the effects of a national health care system. Professor Brian Blase, who works for the Heritage Foundation and examines the effects of the Affordable Care Act (ACA), made for an excellent class with a lot of expert analysis of the various and controversial aspects of ACA.

Through the "Live. Learn. Intern," program I had my first professional experience interning at the Association for Enterprise Opportunity. AEO is a non-profit association that helps entrepreneurs and microbusinesses acquire funds and training. They have many initiatives, including the "Power of One in Three Report" which found that if just one in three of these microbusinesses across America would hire an additional employee, the U.S. would be at full employment. At my internship,

I provided strategic and organizational support in briefing government officials on Capitol Hill regarding AEO's Small Business Economic Impact Research. This included helping set up and run a briefing in the United States Capitol Building. During my time at AEO, I helped gather data on the size and effect that microbusiness has in each county across the United States to present to AEO members and influence public policy. I had the opportunity to help run a partnership between AEO and AARP and specifically provided logistical support in developing the content for, scheduling, and briefing "AARP Microbusiness 50+ meetings." Finally, I analyzed and managed constituent information within database and help plan, budget, and advertise for AEO's 22nd Annual Conference: "TILT Forward: The Power of Microbusiness."

The schedule was busy but weekends were free to spend exploring D.C. My apartment was located just three blocks from the Capitol Building and perfect walking distance to the National Mall. Living in D.C. was incredible. I have never lived in a big city or on the east coast, so having this opportunity was a completely new experience. The Smithsonian Museums are all free, including the zoo, and weekends were spent sightseeing at museums, monuments, and memorials. The Fund for American Studies even provided us with a walking monument tour at night to learn more about the monuments and memorials on the National Mall. My family was able to visit and enjoyed sightseeing as well. I saw a lot while I was in D.C. and really enjoyed the World War II Memorial, Arlington Cemetery, and the Lincoln Memorial. Each one was incredibly well done and showed tremendous respect to our fallen soldiers, or in commemorating an American hero. Finally, living in D.C. for

the fall semester opened the doors for other new experiences that I never could have done. For example, I was able to travel to New York for Thanksgiving break and see all the tourist sights in New York, even witnessing the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade.

In conclusion, the funds provided to me through Linfield helped to make my semester in Washington, D.C. a reality for me. Without them, I don't think I could have taken a semester off from Linfield to study in Washington, D.C. and gain the professional experience I needed. I would highly recommend the "Live. Learn. Intern" experience and its various programs to any student that is interested and hope more will come from Linfield. The program was excellent in working with the internships to schedule trips to the various places and planning classes around a working (9-5:30) schedule. It was busy, but juggling classes with work was manageable through this program. Finally, I want to especially thank the donor at Linfield for the support that made this amazing experience all possible.