

Here's my Washington Program Story

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Major: Government and Literature (Dual)

Program: CMC's semester in DC program consists of a full time internship, two classes, and a research paper. The classes are both in Government. The internship and research paper can count for credit in other subjects. For example, someone who writes an economics research paper can appeal to have their paper count as an economics credit.

Classes meet Monday and Thursday nights from 6:30 – 8:30 pm. Going to class is a really nice way to see everyone else on the program and catch up on how everyone's work week is going. The program runs on CMC's schedule, so the program starts when classes start at CMC and finishes at the same time.

Typical Day: The typical day varies depending on where you intern, but my day usually started when I woke up at 8:15 am, had breakfast, and walked over to my office (which was conveniently located one mile from my apartment) to get to work by 9. I interned at *The Hill* newspaper, which primarily covers Congress. About once a week I would go to the Capitol to attend a hearing or to try to get quotes from various congressmen. If I wasn't at the Capitol, I'd stay at my office and work on different research or articles. My internship involved being really proactive; if I wanted work, I'd have to ask for it. The work varied day to day, from writing blog posts of Senators' tweets to copy-editing op-eds for the newspaper. I was done with my work at 5, and I'd either walk back to the apartment or head over to the classroom (which was located conveniently two blocks from my office). If it wasn't a school day, I'd head home and eat dinner and relax for a few hours. Then I'd do my reading for class and conduct some research for the research paper. On days where I had class, I'd usually get back to the apartment at around 9 pm and just relax until I went to bed.

Highlights: I loved the parts of my internship where I got to speak with congressmen at an energy conference and got to ask Secretary of Energy Steven Chu a question. Another highlight was speaking with Governor Nikki Haley from South Carolina and Governor Bob McDonnell from Virginia on who they were going to endorse in the presidential election (I was in DC during the fall of 2011, when the Republican nominees were campaigning pretty heavily). I wrote up an article on Haley and McDonnell's responses which made it to the front page of *The Hill's* website. It was very exciting!

Aside from the highlights of my internship, exploring DC was also a highlight of my semester. I really enjoyed visiting all the monuments –from Lincoln’s to Jefferson’s to the new MLK monument – as well as seeing all the (free!) museums. The city has so much to offer and is extremely accessible by the train. My apartment also planned a photo scavenger hunt for all the CMCers on our program. We met at someone’s apartment on Saturday night and split into different groups. Each group had a camera, and had to complete various tasks, such as taking a picture at Georgetown law school, taking a picture by our classroom, taking a picture at a Walgreens, etc. Afterward, we all met up at someone’s apartment and hung out. It was probably one of my favorite nights in DC; it was a great way to explore the city and hang out with everyone in the program.



Challenges: The program can get very monotonous at times. It’s hard to be doing the same thing every single day, and have classes 2/5 out of every weeknight. It was definitely an adjustment from being at CMC, where we have a lot of free time and time to engage in extracurricular activities. I would sometimes try to see a movie on a Tuesday evening or go out to dinner during a weekday to change up the pace of the week, which helped a lot.

Advice: 1) Take advantage of the weekends to go on fun, exciting trips! While the weekdays can be long, spend at least every Saturday or Sunday exploring some part of the city. If museums aren’t your thing, there are great restaurants in the city and a lot of colleges in the area (George Washington University, Georgetown, and American University) which have vibrant social lives.

2) That brings me to my next piece of advice...go out on the weekends! Especially after a long week at work, it’s nice to blow off some steam.

3) Think long and hard about where you want to intern. You will be spending at least 40 hours a week wherever you choose to work, so make sure it’s a place you’re passionate about.

4) For housing – LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION! It was really nice living a mile from the office I worked at, as well as living a mile from the classroom. While other people had to take the train every night after class – sometimes taking up to 40 minutes – I only had a 15 minute walk back to my apartment.