

Signing Off!

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After two years of being a Reproductive Rights and Reproductive Health Intern through Newcomb Institute, my time is coming to an end. Reflecting on my past four years here at Tulane, I can honestly say this internship was one of the most meaningful and impactful experiences I have had as an undergraduate. This internship alone has not only taught me so much about how to be a reproductive justice advocate, but it is also what shaped my future career path and inspired the topic for my Senior Honor's Thesis. For my last blog post I would like to reflect on my journey as an intern... beginning in the Summer of 2019:

It was the Summer of 2019 when I worked as a research assistant in the Department of Sociology that I discovered my passion for maternal/child health. Under the

instruction of Dr. Katherine Johnson, I helped further her research, which focused on working and nursing mothers in New Orleans. Together, we analyzed how the Affordable Care Act, a provision calling for certain employers to provide reasonable break time and private space to express milk, helped alleviate barriers to breastfeeding in the workplace. I read and coded articles relating to the substantial health benefits of breastfeeding to both the infant and the mother and learned how societal conditions affect breastfeeding and are indicative of a misogynistic undertone in our society. I recall many of the interviews I conducted with a diverse population of mothers across New Orleans. I was surprised to learn that the majority of mothers were unsatisfied with their workplace conditions while breastfeeding and that many women were unaware of lactation rooms and wished they were educated more on the benefits of breastfeeding by their peers and caregivers. Listening to the concerns and experiences of these working mothers inspired and motivated me to write my Honors Thesis in reproductive sociology and one day enter the field of maternal and child health as an OBGYN.

I began a new project at the start of my Fall 2020 internship. I helped Dr. Johnson research gestational surrogacy and artificial insemination statutes for her upcoming book that examines how different states classify parentage under the Uniform Parentage Act. Together, we created a chart summarizing the statutes for all 50 U.S. states. Dr. Johnson will use this chart in the appendix of her book as a way to summarize the data we collected. I am looking forward to seeing the final product and watching her first book come to life!

Finally, in my last semester as an intern, Dr. Johnson and I circled back to her original project on Working and Nursing mothers in New Orleans. We are currently in the process of publishing a paper that discusses maternity leave, specifically U.S. women's perceptions of actual maternity leave versus optimal maternity leave. We hope to have our paper done and submitted to our chosen journal before the end of the internship!

It is bittersweet that my time with Newcomb Institute and as an undergraduate at Tulane is coming to an end. The work I did with Dr. Johnson continues to help me remember where and how my passion for medicine was developed and supported. I will definitely take with me all I have learned through this internship onto the next stage of my educational career as a medical student at Tulane University School of Medicine.

Special thanks to Dr. Daniel and Dr. Johnson for their continued support and mentorship throughout my time as an intern.

Goodbye for now Newcomb!