

My Time @ CLPP's Reproductive Justice/Social Justice Conference!

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Hello everyone,

Before I wrap up my last week as a Tulane student and inch closer to post-grad life (make it stop!), I wanted to thank NCI for all you do to enrich our college experiences. Whether it was my time as a student leader of a Newcomb organization (shoutout to FAST) or getting the opportunity to go to an incredible conference, NCI really helped shape my time here at Tulane. So-thank you, NCI! I wanted to take this time to reflect on my experience at the Civil Liberties & Public Policy conference (CLPP) last month.

CLPP is an annual Reproductive Justice/Social Justice conference for student and community activists. In my opinion, CLPP stood out from other social justice spaces I've been in. This is because it seemed to have a much more grassroots/bottom-up/community-oriented approach than some other spaces that tend to give me an icky top-down/corporate feeling. CLPP seemed more genuine and impactful. I suspect this has a lot to do with their commitment to center the voices of queer/trans/POC/disabled folks who have been historically (and currently) excluded, silenced, and side-lined by the mainstream reproductive rights movement. I hate to use this buzzword, but CLPP actually practices intersectionality—not like other spaces who simply talk about intersectionality as they continue to exclusively center cis, heterosexual, white women. The conference had around 80 different workshops/trainings to choose from and they covered topics including racial justice, queering reproductive justice, immigrant rights, and so much more.

My favorite part of the conference was the abortion speak-out on the first night. I learned a lot from those who shared their abortion stories on stage to a room full of relative strangers. They were brave and unapologetic and I loved it. The feeling of unadulterated support that filled the room was awe-inspiring.

Attending CLPP was like an affirmation that I am on the right path (my path being a career and a lifetime fighting for reproductive justice). Seeing so many fierce activists and organizers in one place was inspiring to say the least. It reminded me that I am never alone in this fight, even when I find myself surrounded by people who just don't seem to care enough (or maybe just not as much as I'd like them to). I know it is super unfair for me to expect everyone around me to join the fight for reproductive justice (after all, it is NOT easy work), but I would be lying if I said I'm not deeply disappointed and even angry every single time I come across someone who is apathetic to the cause. What this conference gave me was the much-needed reminder that there are so, so many incredible folks out there who are just as angry as I am and who I can depend on to keep showing up. Feeling like you're getting relentlessly pummeled by frequent legislative losses and having to bear witness to a massive rollback of human rights is EXHAUSTING (and not to mention, infuriating). So whenever I feel myself starting to lose hope, I think of the trailblazers who came before me...And now, I will also think of the incredible activists I witnessed at CLPP. So, how has this conference helped with my future ambitions? By reminding me of our collective power and restoring my faith that we will prevail. We have to. Our lives depend on it.

Basically...if you are in need of some inspiration or restoration, I would definitely recommend attending CLPP. Thanks, NCI!

All the best,

Caroline Kacmarsky