

PLEN: Women, Law, Legal Advocacy

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Byria Hamblin majors in political science with a minor in sociology, and is interested in a career in legal advocacy and human rights. With funding from Newcomb College Institute, she attended Public Leadership Education Network (PLEN)'s Women, Law, and Legal Advocacy seminar this year. Read about Byria's experience below:

Describe yourself and why you wanted to attend the PLEN conference:

I have always been passionate about legal advocacy. I have also always wanted to work in DC, so I saw this conference as a great opportunity to get a glimpse of the legal sphere in DC.

What were your favorite parts of the conference?

My favorite part of the conference was getting to listen to how the speakers began their careers on the hill, how their experiences lead them to different paths of legal advocacy, and how their networks guided them through all of this. I also really enjoyed learning the value of networking, maintaining professional relationships, and informational interviews. I never saw networking nearly as important as all of the speakers stressed it was.

Highlight a speaker or a job site you visited:

The panel Careers on Capitol Hill was particularly rewarding for me. Being from the South and knowing very few people in DC, I have always questioned how I am going to get my start on the Hill. All of it felt so out of reach for me. Meagan Lynch's story of how she launched her career on the Hill spoke to me. Her experience of rising from an intern to the Director of Communications sounded exactly like what I want to do. I knew I want to be promoted from within rather than bouncing from position to position. Consequently, I ran over to my favorite representative from home, Sheila Jackson Lee. I am now looking to pursue an internship in her office in DC!

Tell us one thing you learned that you hope to never forget:

I hope I never forget to own my accomplishments, that failure is a learning process, that money is a feminist issue, and that if we, as women, do not represent ourselves, no one else will.

Why should other students attend a PLEN conference?

I would highly recommend every women looking to pursue any kind of professional career to attend a PLEN conference. The confidence, networking skills and overall exposure the field of your interest is beyond rewarding.

Does this sound like something you might be interested in? Tulane undergraduate students can apply to [NCI for funding](#) to attend PLEN conferences. Email Anna Mahoney at amhone4@tulane.edu for more information.

Responses have been lightly edited for length and clarity.