

PLEN: Women in Health Policy

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Meet Emma Bassin. Emma majors in public health and Spanish and is interested in a career in resolving barriers to access to health insurance and delivery services in domestic and Latin American healthcare systems. With funding from Newcomb College Institute, she attended Public Leadership Education Network (PLEN)'s Women in Health Policy seminar. Read about her experience below:

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

I recently started my graduate studies in public health at Tulane with a focus in Health Systems Management, and I'm most passionate about the ways in which health systems can be restructured in order to best fit the health care needs of their more vulnerable populations. I've recently come to an academic/professional crossroads, where I know I want to work in this branch of health policy, but I am unsure about whether I want to work domestically or internationally. I was super excited to learn about future career paths from experts in the field!

What were your favorite parts of the conference?

I really enjoyed the opportunity to network with such an incredible group of health policy professionals, as well as with such accomplished collegiate peers. Learning about the varying experiences people had had on their journey to their current position was super reassuring, as I start looking for a job for next year. We spent an entire workshop developing our networking skills, and were able to practice them at a couple different events throughout the weekend. Additionally, I loved getting to learn from the other collegiate women about their experiences on their own campuses and their career goals for the future. It was so motivating to spend that time with women who are as passionate about this field as I am.

Highlight a speaker or job site you visited:

I visited the National Academy of State Health Policy (NASHP) for my site visit on the second day of the conference. We sat around a conference table with female leaders of the organization and learned more about the nonpartisan group's efforts to support health policy innovation at the state level. These women came from a variety of backgrounds, including work in AmeriCorps, federally-qualified health centers, Medicaid expansion and other specialized health policy fields.

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

I think the biggest takeaway I got from attending PLEN is the importance of confidently asserting myself as a woman in the job hunt and in the workplace. I learned that a firm handshake and a "Thank You" email will go a long way, and that I can actually hold my own in an unfamiliar professional setting. I frequently second-guess myself when communicating professionally, but PLEN reassured me that I should own my accomplishments and proudly, yet humbly, share them.

Why should other students attend a PLEN conference?

Everyone should attend a PLEN conference during their time at Tulane, if they get the opportunity! Being immersed in such an empowering community of accomplished women from across the country was just the motivator I needed to power through the rest of the semester.

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.