

PLEN: Women in Global Policy

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Sophia Angeletti newcomb@tulane.edu

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Meet Sophia Angeletti! Sophia majors in international relations and Middle Eastern studies, and minors in Arabic. She's interested in a career in Middle East research and diplomacy, and thanks to a grant from Newcomb College Institute she attend Public Leadership Education Network's Women in Global Policy seminar. Read about her experience below:

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

I am a rising junior studying International Relations with a focus on the Middle East. Since beginning my education at Tulane University, I have been interested in conflict resolution, diplomacy, multilateral institutions, and research. I have also narrowed

my focus to the study of the Middle East through studying abroad in Israel and Jordan as well as conducting research on the region. I wanted to attend PLEN: Women in Global Policy to learn about career options that could potentially combine all of my interests. Specifically, I am interested in both diplomacy and research and would love to find a job post graduating that combines the two. Furthermore, I wanted to attend PLEN in order to increase my general knowledge of careers in global policy and use the conference as an opportunity to network with women who have already been successful in the field.

What were your favorite parts of the conference?

My favorite part of the conference were the site visits. Specifically, site visits to the Embassy of Afghanistan and the U.S. Department of State. At the Embassy of Afghanistan, I was able to meet with a female Afghani diplomat and learn about her journey from living under Taliban rule to becoming a diplomat as well as U.S.-Afghani foreign relations. At the U.S. Department of State, I was able to hear from a variety of current female U.S. Foreign Service Officers about the career options available through the State Department. The State Department visit concluded with a diplomacy simulation that allowed participants to take on the roles of diplomats attempting to negotiate a compromise to a potential nuclear crisis. Both of the site visits helped me to envision a career in global policy as a more obtainable career objective than I had originally imagined.

Highlight a speaker or a job site you visited:

On one of the nights of the conference, we were split up into smaller groups and had dinner with recent PLEN alumni. I had the opportunity to have dinner with Jennifer Ham, a Foreign Service Officer who is about to finish her first year of training in preparation for working in Turkey. Speaking with Jennifer provided greater insight into the steps to becoming a Foreign Service Officer from the perspective of someone just starting their career in the Foreign Service. After spending a few days hearing from panels of highly accomplished diplomats and ambassadors, it was nice to gain a different perspective.

Tell us what you learned that you hope to never forget:

Every panel and speaker eventually reiterated the same message: a career path is not a straight line, but rather more of a winding zig-zag. I feel that sometimes we are taught that if we do x, y, and z it will lead to a certain outcome, but that is often not

the case. Every speaker came into her current position in a unique way. I hope to continue to work hard and do what makes me happy, acknowledging that I may not always have control over the events that befall my future.

Why should other students attend a PLEN conference?

It provides an amazing opportunity to meet empowered women, learn about opportunities and resources to be more successful in the future, and gain the confidence to be more successful in future endeavors.

Does this sound like something you might be interested in? Tulane undergraduate students can apply to NCI for funding to attend PLEN conferences. Email Betsy Lopez at elopez@tulane.edu for more information.

Responses have been lightly edited for length and clarity.