

PLEN: Women in Global Policy

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Tatum West

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Meet Tatum West! Tatum majors in International Relations and is interested in a career in foreign policy. Thanks to a grant from Newcomb College Institute, she attended Public Leadership Education Network (PLEN)'s Women in Global Policy seminar. Read about her experience below:

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

Throughout my time at Tulane, I have been fortunate enough to gain work experience abroad, as well as an overall internationally focused education. The PLEN conference seemed like the perfect way to tie everything together and to start thinking about how to transfer my experiences to a meaningful career in global policy.

What were your favorite parts of the conference?

My favorite part of the conference were the speakers and panels. I found it very helpful to hear from accomplished women about their careers and how they got there. PLEN also provided for many opportunities for networking and engaging with the speakers which I really enjoyed because I like interacting with others and listening to the experiences of others who may be able to offer valuable advice.

Highlight a speaker or a job site you visited:

One of my favorite panels was the Female Ambassador Panel, which included the former U.S. Ambassadors to Malta, El Salvador, the World's Fair Expo, and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. Every woman on the panel came from very different backgrounds and were role models who embodied values of leadership, service, hard work, and perseverance. It was helpful to hear from women who have careers to which I aspire, and it was fascinating to hear from the women at the top who have had exceptionally remarkable, unique, and impactful careers.

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

Every single panelist emphasized the value and importance of relationships. Being able to form, sustain, and utilize your network is key to navigating D.C. and the foreign policy and international development fields. Additionally, the speakers highlighted the significance of just simply being kind and always putting your best foot forward.

Why should other students attend a PLEN conference?

I would recommend PLEN to everyone! I honestly didn't understand exactly how to (correctly) network prior to this conference. PLEN showed me that building a network and forming relationships are extremely important! Not to mention, it doesn't hurt to have the opportunity to include so many amazing and accomplished women in your

network. I would also say that PLEN does a really great job of including students from a variety of educational backgrounds. For example, there were many public health students and a couple of computer science majors and PLEN included a Global Public Health panel as well as a Cyber Security and Policy panel. There is something for everyone!

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.