

PLEN: Women in Public Policy

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Katie Donahue newcomb@tulane.edu

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Meet Katie Donahue! She studies political science, social policy/practice, and Italian, and she's interested in working in campaign finance or nonprofit fundraising. She recently attended Public Leadership Education Network (PLEN)'s Women in Public Policy seminar.

Tell us about yourself and why you wanted to attend the PLEN conference:

I'm a senior in the midst of a career search and thought that experiencing D.C. and hearing from those who held jobs I may be interested in or not know about would be a productive way to spend the last week of winter break! It was a really fulfilling experience and I enjoyed meeting Tulane students that attended the conference as well as those from universities across the country.

What were your favorite parts of the conference?

I really enjoyed the opportunity to network with my peers from other universities and hear about their studies. The breakout panels on immigration and criminal justice were fascinating, and the women who spoke to us on those issues were truly leaders in their fields. It was interesting to learn more about topics that I was interested in and to explore new areas in a setting like this conference.

Highlight a speaker or a job site you visited:

One of my favorite speakers was Dr. Unique Morris-Hughes. She highlighted the importance of work at the local and state level, which can sometimes be portrayed as less important than federal work, but can truly be more impactful. She spoke to us like the responsible young adults we are and really took the time to address our concerns and questions.

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

The importance of networking and relationship building has been drilled into my head and I'm sure I won't forget it soon! Another thing that became clear during the seminar is that there is truly no one path to success. We heard from so many wonderful women who had chosen vastly different schools, internships, and jobs, but all ended up in fantastic and fulfilling careers. As one of our speakers put it, it's really more of a career "jungle gym" than a ladder.

Why should other students attend a PLEN conference?

PLEN did a great job of ensuring that we heard from people with very different life paths and different opinions, so there really was something for everyone in the seminar. I learned so much about my professional and academic options and will definitely keep in touch with the peers and mentors I met.

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.