

Sharing my work as a researcher and reproductive rights advocate

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Student VOICES, Student ACTION

Jeffrey Chene (M '18) is majoring in neuroscience and receiving a public health and Spanish. She hopes to work as a physician. This summer, she interned with Dr. Alissa Lederer on reproductive rights and reproductive health.

This summer, I worked with Dr. Alissa Lederer on sexual health education research. Unfortunately, the prevalence of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) is increasing for the first time in almost a decade. Young people are disproportionately affected by STIs, and sexual education is crucial to manage the connection and transmission of these conditions. Our primary project was conducting qualitative analysis focusing on college students' knowledge of STIs. Dr. Lederer designed a study to assess students' understanding of critical sexual health information before and after viewing an educational program. The outcomes of our research informed how to design better pre- and post-test forms, provided questionnaire data about particular knowledge gaps, open-ended questions allowed students to describe information they reportedly learned as a result of the program. I spent many weeks categorizing the data to understand and then eventually quantify the responses based on themes I identified. While my area of focus was sexual education, I was exposed to a variety of research topics and methods within this broad, expansive subject in addition to identifying college students' gaps in STI knowledge. My other projects were helping to develop a critical communication measure for the National College Health Assessment (NCHA) survey which will be used at hundreds of universities nationwide, and contributing to a family planning and contraceptive counseling grant proposal. Each task addressed a critical component of the research process, whether it was funding to start a project, instrument design to collect data, or analysis to present results. While

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I enjoyed the autonomy of the position. I appreciated my weekly meetings with Dr. Lederer to discuss our findings. I am excited to how much I learned this summer in addition to honing my data analysis technique. I expanded my research presentation skills and received a great introduction to the reproductive clinic and movement. As a neuroscience and public health student, I have a profound appreciation for scientific advancement and how research can influence upstream policies. I hope our findings inform health education and influence methods to limit the prevalence of STIs, reduce my desire to become a physician. This not seemed, I now hope to explore the health field in the areas of health education and advocacy prior to diving into the medical field. I am excited to how different my own sexual health knowledge (as well as many of the participants) was prior to working on this project. I am honored to have been selected as a full intern to follow my projects to completion. I hope to work with other reproductive health and rights teams to explore the Tulane community to the key issues we are working on. This internship also introduced me to the pervasive impact of reproductive health in society. Through conversations with Dr. Lederer, other interns, and guest lecturers, I learned how reproductive health and justice affect economics, housing, and criminal issues. I feel privileged and excited to continue as an intern and to reproductive health advocates, and I urge others to get involved through conversations, research, or actions to improve health and rights outcomes.

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REPRODUCED FROM 2017

I cannot believe I am over halfway through the Reproductive Rights and Reproductive Health Internship for the semester. My work with Dr. Lederer has been an invaluable exposure to sexuality health education. Last blog, I wrote about the strides I have made in my scientific writing. At each weekly meeting, Dr. Lederer and I add to the manuscript, refining the introduction, methodology, and results. I value the collaborative process, as I have learned from her feedback and writing style, and I hope these skills will inform future projects. Once, these sections are more solidified and polished, we will begin the work on the discussion where we can not

only interpret findings and compare results to previous work, but also explain the implications of the research of sexuality education knowledge gaps and how health professionals can mitigate knowledge deficiencies.

As discussed previously, working on the manuscript has improved my scientific writing. The final product will be submitted to a scientific sexuality health education journal whose readership is primarily composed of researchers, clinicians, and educators to hopefully guide improved education practices. Nevertheless, writing for public audiences can be just as important as academic groups. Over the summer, the Media Specialist at the Newcomb College Institute asked to feature my work as a Reproductive Rights and Reproductive Health Intern in NEWCOMB Magazine. I was elated at the opportunity to share my internship experience with others. Over Homecoming weekend, the magazine was distributed and Newcomb alumni and Tulane parents read about my personal and academic progress from the internship.

In my short article, I discussed the individual projects that I completed or was working on with Dr. Lederer as well as the broader implications of the internship experience. I wrote of connection to a group of women leaders that shares the same passion for reproductive justice, but developed the interest from diverse pathways. I discussed the inspiring professionals who took time out of their work days to speak about health, housing, economic, and criminal justice issues and explained the obvious and (often) not so apparent connection of their work to reproductive justice. I am so grateful to be featured in the magazine and not only share my development as a researcher, but also my growth as a reproductive rights advocate. I will continue to share my engagement with the field whether it is in print, online, or in person.