

PLEN: Women and Congress

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Meet Eleanor! She is majoring in political science with a concentration in international relations, and wants to eventually work in international development and relief or public policy. Eleanor attended Public Leadership Education Network (PLEN)'s Women in Congress seminar this spring.

Describe yourself and tell us why you wanted to attend the Women in Congress seminar:

I am a soon-to-be graduating senior, and am obviously looking for a job post-graduation. I have always been interested in government and public policy, especially on the international scale. I wanted to attend the PLEN conference

because I wanted real exposure to what life was like in Washington, D.C. for a person working in policy, whether it be domestic or international. I also wanted to learn more about potential jobs/career paths I could have if I ever decided to live in Washington, D.C.

What were your favorite parts of the conference?

Probably my favorite part was being able to meet all the incredible women that were learning with me on the conference and are currently working in D.C. I learned so much from everyone, and I feel like I have whole new group of friends! Another favorite part of the conference was the networking night PLEN put on. It was a great opportunity to practice our networking skills and we got to meet awesome people in the process!

Highlight a speaker or a job site you visited:

A huge highlight for me was listening to Clare Bresnahan speak on behalf of the She Should Run campaign. She spoke about the dire need for women to run for public office. Before hearing her speak, I never thought about ever running for public office in my life, but after hearing her I feel a lot more inspired to run one day. I had never felt so motivated and inspired by a speaker in my life before her.

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

Something I learned that I hope to never forget is the feeling of complete and absolute empowerment. This conference taught me to not question my capabilities. I learned that I should not hold myself back just for the sake of other people or for the fear of failure. It was an incredible week.

Why should other students attend a PLEN conference?

Students should attend a PLEN conference because it is life-changing. You will gain real world experience in networking, life on and off the hill, and be able to meet incredible people along the way. Before this conference I was terrified of graduating and going out into the real world, but now I feel confident in my next steps after graduation all due to the things I learned from PLEN.

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.