

PLEN: Women, Law, and Legal Advocacy

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Meet Emma Hurler! She is a senior interested in health policy, policy research and development.

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

I am a Public Health and Political Science double major and I am interested in creating policy and affecting change by bettering people's health. I wanted to attend the PLEN Conference to hear more from women who have pursued degrees in law to see if it is practical to pursue a degree in law in order to work in public policy. I am interested in going to law school after taking some time off to work after I graduate this coming spring, and I felt that attending PLEN was extremely interesting and useful to see how women in the field I am interested in are using their degrees. After attending PLEN, I feel more motivated than ever to pursue my interests because the possibilities of career options seem endless!

Describe your favorite parts of the conference:

My favorite part of the conference was hearing from women who all pursued degrees in law but who have taken a variety of career paths to get where they are now. All the speakers we heard from had their own unique interests that guided their career paths, which led them to use their degrees in different ways. I truly enjoyed hearing from these accomplished women because they gave useful advice to us as women considering careers in law and public policy. It's also very humbling to be surrounded by these accomplished women – both the panelists and the participants – and I found that I learned from the participants just as much as I did from the panelists.

Highlight a speaker or a job site you visited:

One of my favorite visits was the day we visited Capitol Hill. We spent the morning with two panels of women, who work in either the personal offices of Congressmen and women or on committees, and the women we met were very engaging and I learned the most from them. They shared what their roles are currently and discussed how they got there. While they discussed what they do day-to-day, they also gave advice and shared their opinions on what we should and should not do in order to succeed in our jobs in the future. These two panels were very insightful and provided a good look at what we could expect if we decide to work on Capitol Hill in the future.

Detail what you learned that you hope to never forget:

One detail that I learned that I hope to never forget from this conference is to say yes to everything that I possibly can, no matter how insignificant, boring, or unglamorous the task might be. This was highlighted by one of the speakers on

Capitol Hill and she reminded us to put in the work and do the little tasks that may not be as enjoyable but are crucial to the operation of your workplace. I thought it was a very practical anecdote and as a person who sometimes hesitates to say yes in the face of uncertainty, I thought it was a good reminder that I can carry with me both in my professional and personal life.

Why should other students attend a PLEN conference:

I believe attending a PLEN conference is useful for any woman who is considering going into public policy, law, government, non-profits, or any of the more specific areas on which each seminar focuses. Attending a PLEN conference gave me invaluable networking skills, and hearing from women who are leaders in their fields inspired and motivated me to pursue a career in public policy. It is also a great opportunity to go to DC and experience (for a short time) what it is like to work in our nation's capital.

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.