

Saying Farewell to Paris (for now)

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It's hard to believe that my year in Paris is done! Having this internship was a great way to extend my time in Paris and bring a close to an incredible year. My work with COPE was varied, which helped me grow in each of my learning objectives for the summer. From research to translations to editing, I was able to improve my writing skills in both English and French, and the small nature of the office really gave me an environment where I always had to take initiative on a task. I also learned more about being an effective change-maker. After seeing the wide variety of partners and organizations in COPE's network, it's become all the more evident to me that

change is best brought about via a collective effort.

With my internship completed I feel as though I've only scratched the surface of the legal rights and concerns surrounding the families of incarcerated. I'd like to learn more about how we treat children of prisoners in the US and see how it compares to my experiences in France. If possible, I'd like to find a program in Louisiana where I can accompany children on their prison visits.

For other students interested in an internship concerning human rights and/or nonprofit work, my most valuable advice would be to find an organization that actually needs your help, not necessarily a big name just to put on a resume. There are so many internships where you barely dip your toe into the substantive work and leave without having much project work to show for it. Find an internship where you'll be able to take on some type of leadership position and where you can (hopefully) see directly how your work contributes to the organization on a meaningful level. It's also crucial for any internship to create positive relationships with your coworkers; you never know who may be a future business partner, networking connection, or even a good friend!

In terms of finding leadership positions, I've found the simplest and most effective way to get yourself where you want to be is just to ask. If you feel you are qualified to take on a task or project, requesting a leadership role politely and with confidence will go a long way. Asking directly shows a superior that you have both initiative and drive.

That's all my advice for now! Until next time, Paris.