

Winding down with the WLC

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My time with the Women's Leadership Council is wrapping up quickly. I am putting the finishing touches on the voting guide project, and working to get everything organized in order to pass it along to the next intern. I've learned a lot in my position, most importantly that the connections you make are always important and will always stick with you.

I've decided to turn this post into a list of lessons learned in the last six weeks.

First, grammar is so important. I was tasked with creating fact sheets to accompany the voting guide questions. I worked for a very long time on them, but when I went into the meeting with my supervisors the first comment had to do with grammar and uniformity of sentences. I never want to be in a meeting again where anyone is looking at my use of participles and nouns instead of the content of my message.

Second, teaching yourself a new skill is very rewarding. Over the last two months I've worked hard to develop my design skills using Adobe InDesign and Illustrator. It was a huge challenge at first, but I am excited to keep learning and to apply my skills to new projects.

Third, knowledge is power. Seriously, I now know so much about Louisiana's state politics that I sometimes think I could write a book. My research skills from school easily translated into the research I needed to do for this project.

Fourth, time-management is hard, but ultimately very rewarding. Anyone who has ever worked remotely, or is still in school, understands the importance of time-management. It is the most difficult part of my transition from student-life to work-life. Instead of deciding when to do my work, as I did when in school, I now have a set time-frame to do the work in. It's causing me to shift my regular routines as I adjust to day-time productivity. Fortunately, I definitely won't be missing those late night's in the library or PJ's.

Fifth, community-level changes can make the biggest impact. I studied International Relations and French in school, so perhaps it seems weird that I would think that the micro can be more important than the macro, but studying international processes and other parts of the world just go to show how much change happens at the individual level. Changes in communities inspire change further abroad, and it can be so exciting to see the imprint of your own hand on a new development.

I am so fortunate that my internship has transitioned into a full-time position with the organization, and I can't wait to learn more about what United Way does on a daily basis. It's exciting to realize that there are so many groups working "on the ground" to make this city better for its residents.

In closing, here is a quick example of how my education and professional experience have inspired a passion for proactivity in me:

I was looking at a house just the yesterday and thought how lovely the street was, until I turned around and saw a big empty lot, complete with a rusted and falling

barbed-wire fence just across the road. I think most people see that and they turn around with a grimace, "What an ugly lot" they say to themselves. Instead, I stood and looked for a moment, taking in its proportions, studying the buildings all around, and began imagining a park. On my walk back home I envisioned the play-set, the community gardens, the little walking path that would wrap around...Finding a group of people who support that type of imagination and learning how to empower yourself to make changes is the most important thing to any type of career in public policy.