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Office of University
Communications

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Internship in Washington D.C. Lands Student a Job and Countless Memories

BOILING SPRINGS, N.C.-“The most life-changing opportunities often come out of nowhere and scare you half to death. That’s what makes them worth doing.”

Alice Byrd in Washington

Alice Byrd was undoubtedly terrified when she arrived in Washington D.C. for her four-month internship at kglobal, but, as she explains, the scariest opportunities are usually the most rewarding.

Byrd is a rising senior majoring in communication and new media with an emphasis in public relations and minoring in political science. During the spring semester of 2016, she completed an internship at kglobal, a public relations firm in Washington D.C. that collaborates with a range of clients from small businesses to national corporations.

Byrd decided to complete her internship in D.C., because she has always been fascinated with politics and leadership, and she jumped at the idea of gaining experience in the nation’s capital. The corporation itself also focuses on an idea that enticed her – Leadership and the American Presidency. “More specifically, how a president’s leadership style shapes their administration and their legacy,” Byrd describes.

Byrd had a variety of exciting responsibilities to keep her busy while she was in D.C. “Each day came with a host of unique and challenging tasks – some days it was doing a photo shoot for a client, and other days it was running goodie bags all over town the Friday before the White House Easter Egg Roll,” Byrd explains.

Between managing classes and her internship, Byrd made sure to find time to explore the city. On Thursdays, Byrd and her

Alice Byrd in Washington, DC

fellow participants (15 in total) were fortunate enough to visit various sites organized through The Fund for American Studies, an educational nonprofit organization. “We went to places like the Department of Commerce, the Australian Embassy, and even met with nonprofits like the National Endowment for Democracy,” Byrd states.

The highlight of Byrd's trip, however, was the day she attended President Trump's inauguration. In the midst of a sea of supporters and protestors alike, Byrd managed to experience the historic ceremony firsthand. "It was a once in a lifetime event, and I got to witness something that not many Americans see in person," Byrd describes. "I saw the peaceful transition of power from one president to another, which is a fundamental part of the United States Democracy."

Getting to know her fellow participants contributed to the overall success of the program. All of the students lived in the same apartment building, situated in the heart of the city on Capitol Hill. This created opportunities for the students to go on adventures as well as build new friendships with one another. "We explored the National Mall and Smithsonian museums in our free time. We travelled to Mount Vernon and Monticello, the homes of two of America's founding fathers," Byrd explains. "We got to meet with dignitaries, diplomats, and other distinguished professionals. Every single day brought a new experience and a new connection."

photo of Alice Byrd in Washington, D.C.

After completing her internship, Byrd was offered a job from kglobal. She plans on moving to Washington D.C. and working for the company full-time after she graduates Gardner-Webb. Her experience in D.C. has completely changed her life for the better, and the memories she made will last a lifetime. "From the rainy Saturday I spent at the [Smithsonian's National] Zoo, to watching the Inauguration on the National Mall, to touring the Washington Post, my semester in D.C. was one that I will never forget."

The Department of Communication and New Media has collaborated with programs in the D.C. area for the past decade, sending about two students per year. For the past two years, it has worked specifically with The Fund for American Studies.

Located in the North Carolina foothills, Gardner-Webb University is a private, Christian, liberal arts university that prepares students to become critical thinkers, effective leaders and compassionate servants in the global community. Emphasizing a strong student-centered experience and rigorous academics, Gardner-Webb ignites learning and service opportunities for undergraduate and graduate students. Ignite your future at Gardner-Webb.edu.