Miriam Peguero Medrano and Katelyn Nawoyski share a lot in common. Both majored in Political Science (among other studies) and graduated from Monmouth in May 2012. And while Kate and Miriam were students at Monmouth, both participated in the Washington Semester program through the Political Science Department and interned at organizations in Washington, D.C.

The Washington Center for Internship and Academic Seminars is a program that connects college students with opportunities to live and work in Washington, D.C. Students majoring in Political Science have the opportunity to apply for the Washington Center and spend the fall, spring, or summer semester taking classes and interning in our nation’s capital. For students aspiring to work in politics, public policy, or foreign affairs, the Washington Semester can be a great way to get hands-on experience and network with other professionals in the field. As Kate describes, “The Washington Center is a great program that helps students from all over the world come to D.C., find internships, take classes in their fields, and attend weekly prestigious programs to make students better fit for the job market post-graduation.”

The Washington Center works hard to place students at internships that relate to their interests and aspirations, and Kate and Miriam both were happy with the placements they found. Kate interned with an non-governmental organization (NGO) called Genocide Watch. “After interviews with multiple organizations, I decided to intern with Genocide Watch for a few reasons,” Kate explains. “For one, the organization is small and after speaking with the NGO’s president I knew that I would get to do a lot of work. I wouldn't just be getting coffee or filing papers. Additionally, the president wanted me to use my communication and technical skills to benefit the organization. It was the perfect internship to utilize both of my majors and allowed me to work in the human rights field, which is a passion of mine.”

Miriam was connected with the International Visitors Leadership Program, which brings emerging or current foreign political leaders to the United States to learn about the country’s politics and culture. For Miriam, the internship provided her with direct experience with diplomacy and international relations. “I wanted to focus on international affairs in some way and my internship was the perfect opportunity to get involved in citizen diplomacy and international diplomacy.”

Although the girls had different responsibilities and focused on different goals and initiatives at each of their sites, both found their experiences to be incredibly worthwhile. “I believe that today you cannot graduate college without some type of internship experience,” Miriam says. “It is crucial not only for your professional growth, but also for your growth as a person. It prepares you for the real world.”

The Washington Center certainly prepared Kate and Miriam for the real world. After graduation, both girls were offered job opportunities in Washington D.C. Kate now works for the U.S. Department of State for CO.NX as a Program Officer/Associate Video Producer. Miriam is Program Assistant for the Case Management Team for the World Bank in the International Centre for Settlement and Investment Disputes.
Katelyn Nawoyski’s internship at Genocide Watch was more than just logging hours and juggling tasks. Because Kate’s internship was with an organization that focused on one of her passions, human rights, she was able to really connect with the responsibilities and challenges she was given.

While at Genocide Watch, Kate served as the Director of Social Media & Outreach as well as the Research Coordinator for Africa. This entailed maintaining Genocide Watch's Facebook and Twitter accounts, communicating with alliance organizations and supporters, and completing the design and implementation of a new website for the organization. Kate also was responsible for updating country pages on the website for eight nations at-risk for or experiencing genocide. With that, Kate composed three different Genocide Alerts to be sent to the Department of State and posted on the internet, which helped to alert the public about genocidal situations in various nations.

Kate’s time at Genocide Watch was invaluable due to all of the responsibilities she was given and hands-on experience she gained. As a student who double majored in Communication with a concentration in Television & Radio Production and Political Science, Kate was glad that she found an internship that incorporated both of her fields of study. Although it sometimes was a challenge to be assigned tasks or duties that she had never done before, Kate was able to learn new skills and build her confidence. “I was thrust into various tasks that sometimes I had no idea how to accomplish, but with dedication and patience I learned,” Kate explains. “I walked away from the internship with web development skills that I never had before, multiple reports I wrote that have been viewed by members of the Department of State, and I gained experience lobbying Congress, among other things.”

She also expanded her knowledge of genocide and human rights due to her experience, and her enthusiasm and drive to learn and research helped her to excel at her tasks. “I found myself frequently researching, but always learning,” Kate says of her internship. “I could have interned somewhere where I would have been doing much simpler or fewer tasks, but I would not have walked away with the same sense of accomplishment or the same skillset.”

Kate encourages other students to take chances and don’t take the easy way out when looking for an internship. For Kate, working hard and developing new skills certainly led to success. She now works at the U.S. Department of State for CO.NX as a Program Officer/Associate Video Producer and credits her past experiences with helping her to be hired for the position. “The fact that I had experience in D.C. working with an NGO did help,” Kate says. “It gave me a connection to the company. Additionally, I was knowledgeable about CO.NX because I had attended a presentation through The Washington Center at which CO.NX staff presented the program's goals and activities.” Kate hopes to continue to work in the video production field and would eventually like to be a documentary filmmaker working with international subjects.
Kiara Toscano is a senior majoring in Applied Communication and minoring in Spanish. While attending the Spring 2013 Communication Career Event and Internship Fair, Kiara was able to speak to a representative from the American Red Cross and became interested in their internship opportunities for the upcoming summer. Kiara was confident that the American Red Cross would be a good fit for her after hearing the agency’s representative describe the responsibilities and tasks of the internship.

While at the American Red Cross, Kiara’s responsibilities included maintaining good relations with businesses and vendors through daily contact, creating spreadsheets for data management, preparing for events, and creating and overseeing the agency’s Facebook page. Although one challenge that Kiara faced at her internship was being confident with her decision making and problem solving skills, she rose to the occasion. One of Kiara’s major successes at the American Red Cross was her help in planning the Women Who Care Luncheon by gathering vendors to showcase their merchandise at the event. “My favorite part of my internship was utilizing my interpersonal communication skills and extensively working as a team player by helping where needed,” Kiara says.

Because of Kiara’s own success with finding an internship through internship and career fairs, she strongly suggests that other students participate in the regular Career Center events to increase their chances at finding an internship. Kiara’s advice to others is to “dress professional and appropriately, have a résumé prepared, and be assertive, and professional when you speak.”

After graduating from Monmouth, Kiara hopes to work for the computer industry. She would also like to explore the political world as well and seek out job opportunities in Washington, D.C.

Communication Major Excels at the American Red Cross

More about Miriam : From the IVLP to the World Bank

Miriam Peguero Medrano studied a variety of subjects while at Monmouth, majoring in Political Science and minoring in Information Technology, Spanish and Business. Spending the semester in Washington, D.C. and interning at the International Visitors Leadership Program (IVLP) gave Miriam a unique opportunity to combine all of her interests and fields of study while gaining direct experience with diplomacy and international affairs.

As an intern, Miriam assisted the Program Officer and Program Assistant with the various projects they were assigned, and each project centered on a theme such as youth leadership, women empowerment, poverty, education, or infrastructure. The purpose of the International Visitors Leadership Program is to bring emerging or current political leaders to the United States so that they can learn about the U.S. and get a greater insight on our policies and culture, and the Department of State pays for these visitors to spend one month in the country. “I think my favorite part of my job was meeting all the international visitors who are very much already successful in their own countries,” Miriam explains. “It was great to hear their stories and experiences.”

Miriam was given responsibilities and tasks crucial to the success of the team’s projects and found the work to be challenging but rewarding. “My biggest challenge was being extremely detail-oriented and mindful of everything I did,” Miriam says of her internship. “When someone is expecting something to be done accurately, the pressure is on and you want to make sure you perform to the best of your ability.” Miriam certainly did that much and more while at the International Visitors Leadership Program.

Now, Miriam works for the World Bank in the International Centre for Settlement and Investment Disputes. She is a Program Assistant for their Case Management Team, which works together with paralegals and lawyers on the legal team of the World Bank. Miriam believes that her internship was crucial in obtaining her current position because it gave her the tools she needed to succeed and to be placed in a location in which she wanted to pursue a career.

After Miriam’s experience at the World Bank concludes in two years, she hopes to attend law school and is excited to see where the future will take her.
Experiential Education is a General Education requirement for ALL undergraduate students that seeks to give students practical, “hands-on” experience in a setting outside the classroom environment. Ex Ed offers students work-related experience and an opportunity to network in their chosen field.

**Ex Ed Leadership Team**

**Mercy Azeke**  
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**Jean Judge**  
Associate Dean for Support Services and Articulation  
Center for Student Success

**William Hill**  
Assistant Dean for Career Services  
Center for Student Success

**Robyn Asaro**  
Assistant Director of Study Abroad

- **Check the Ex Ed Database of Opportunities:** Your source for co-ops, service learning, and internships. Visit http://www2.monmouth.edu/exed-sequel/gateway.html to view listings specifically for your major.
- **Talk to Your Professors:** Did you really enjoy a particular course or topic? Ask your professors if they know of opportunities to practice what you learned! They can be a great resource for finding a placement as well as guiding you through the application process.
- **Visit the Center for Student Success:** Stop by Career Services in the CSS on the lower level of the Student Center and ask about opportunities that may interest you.
- **Don’t Be Afraid to Network:** If you are interested in a particular field or placement, ask around! Ask other students in your major, friends, roommates– even family members or family friends. You never know who will have a great suggestion for you or who can help you get your foot in the door.
- **Google:** Take some time on your own to look for placements that may interest you - utilize Google, LinkedIn, and company websites. Learn as much as you can about what you’d like to do so you’re aware of what’s out there for you.
- **Take the Initiative:** Be confident and don’t let a great opportunity pass you by. Call or email sites that you are interested in to ask for more information - ask about how you can get involved and what you can do to be a part of their field.

**Ex Ed Advising Tips for Students:**

**How will I find an Ex Ed Placement?**

- Co-ops – Courses in which you apply classroom learning in paid academically relevant work experiences. During the course, you meet individually with a faculty sponsor to complete related assignments.

- Internships – This involves courses in your major where students work in field placements and complete related class assignments. Individual department criteria must be met before registering.

- Service Learning – Students are placed in community settings to apply what they learn in the classroom. Students work with a faculty sponsor to complete assignments for the course.

- Study Abroad – Monmouth has programs in London, England, Sydney, Australia, Florence, Italy, and Cadiz, Spain. Through Study Abroad you can take the same number of credits and many of the same courses that you would take at MU for the same tuition and board costs. Students must have sophomore status or above and a minimum GPA of 2.75 to apply.

- Class Projects – An assignment in a course that requires students to complete a project outside the classroom in conjunction with an outside business, governmental, or non-profit agency.