

Wallerstein Scholarship Article

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Slowly driving to 2306 Ivy Road where the Office of Emergency Management is located. Arrived safely at 8:45 AM, and my work starts at 9 AM. A mixed feeling of excitement and nervousness travels throughout my body. It did not take long for my heart to palpitate even further and sweat from every pore when I saw many police cars and realized that I need to park next to them. Even though the policeman who parked next to me said hello with a bright smile, I felt my face become a few shades paler from the thought that I need to park correctly. Allison, the Emergency Management Coordinator, greeted me in her office and took me to the dispatcher room to introduce me. The dispatcher room was very different than I expected. In the dim room, roughly 20 people were dealing with 911 calls and emergency situations while surrounded by multiple desktops and TV screens to look at. Even though people were introducing themselves, they constantly looked at their computer screens and had a single-sided headset on their head to make sure not to miss any emergency calls. Allison gave me the list of projects for the summer after the tour. It made me more nervous because one of the main projects that I needed to work on was developing a public outreach for public and vulnerable population in county. As a student who has little background of emergency management, I felt a huge responsibility on my shoulders. This was my first day of my IPP internship.

Parking at a spot next to police cars at 8:58 AM because I know it takes exactly 2 minutes to go up to the office. The day starts with the sound of door unlocking with my badge. I say good morning to Allison and Maribel and log into my work email right away. I have opened the word document a hundred times, but today feels a bit different. Typing the title called 'Last Report by Joanne Kim' almost felt like I was swallowing something bitter. I started to write about multiple projects that I completed over the summer, explain what projects need to be continued by future

interns, and type what I learned and liked about the internship. I left a thank you card on my boss's desk and hugged Maribel for the last time. Now I am brave enough to casually say goodbye to police as I drive my car away from ECC. I had become accustomed to things that made me so nervous on the first day of internship, and it was bittersweet to leave everything behind. This was the last day of internship.

Looking back, I laugh at the fact that I got nervous by every little thing. The words 'emergency management' scared me because I knew nothing. When I think about the word 'emergency,' I can draw the images of the fire department, police department, and EMT in my head. However, it was more than that. The work that the Office of Emergency Management puts before and after the event/disaster is incredible. As an intern, I watched how Allison plans for an event to run smoothly and deals with an emergency. Behind the scenes, I helped with many documents, branding project, and public outreach plans. If I had to pick one project that made me stressed, it would be the one where I had to come up with public outreach plans for populations in Albemarle county. However, at the end, I had the most fun with the project and built a great mentor-mentee relationship with Allison. She gave me very detailed feedback for my rough draft of public outreach plans. Under her guidance, I slowly learned how to become a member of ECC and a successful intern. It was such a great opportunity for me to come up with creative ideas when I got to design own logos for the department and plan for the public outreach project.

It is a fact that all three levels of government must cooperate and communicate in order to maximize the outcome. By taking some politics and public policy classes at UVA, I know that support from local administrations and governments are crucial to the community. The methods by which all three levels of government handle a certain national problem might be different.

That is why it is so crucial for them to engage in active communication. As a PR/marketing intern for a local government, I truly hope to foster a chain of communication among several communities, people in local areas, and different levels of government. By experiencing the real world of local government with the right mentor, my interests in government not only grew bigger, but also more passionate.

The passing of policy in a democracy is not sustainable without popular support. A clear definition of national interest and an awareness of special issues are crucial for successful leadership. I want to change the policies and laws for people to live in a better community and society. Rather than helping people after they go through all the hardships and struggles, I want to seek ways to help them first even before they reach out to the government or organizations for help. In order for appropriate policies to be successfully enforced, it is necessary to consider multiple outlets to have enough support, commitment, and time. Understanding the policymaking process and creating alternative options are essential for policy advocates. In order for me to pursue my interests in government, it is extremely essential for me to figure out the points of access. By undertaking a public outreach project, I have learned how the local government's policies are created and how they are going to impact the population in Charlottesville greatly. The field of emergency management was just one side that I was lucky to experience over the summer. Based on the work experience I gained at a local government, I hope to continue my career in public policy and government.