

Amnesty International, International Affairs & Life in the U.S. Capital

Hannah Waller (Political Science/International Affairs with a Spanish Minor '15) experiences all D.C. has to offer as an intern at The Washington Center.

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Thomas Jefferson once said, “All is politics in this capital,” and he could not have been more correct. Every lecture, documentary, course, or event can be used as learning and networking opportunities in Washington, D.C. I have only been here a month, but I already feel as if I have doubled my knowledge of politics, international relations and non-profit advocacy. On the non-academic side, I have learned it is custom to stand on the right side of the escalator, to avoid Metro rush hour at all costs, and that House of Cards is a great icebreaker with nearly anyone. The D.C. lifestyle of being busy on a 24/7 basis has proven to be exhausting, but you have no choice when you are surrounded by so many amazing opportunities.

My name is Hannah Waller, and I am a sophomore at UNH. I am majoring in Political Science and International Affairs with a minor in Spanish. This semester, I am interning at Amnesty International USA in Washington, D.C., through The Washington Center for Internships and Academic Seminars. I grew up in Washington State but moved to Keene, NH, after I graduated from high school. I am in the Honors program and have been involved in a variety of organizations at UNH, such as STAND (the student-led movement to end mass atrocities) and Model United Nations.

I am currently interning for the Crisis Prevention and Response team at Amnesty International USA. I love the fact that every day is different, which is a refreshing change from the day-to-day routine you can often develop in college. One day I might attend a hearing at the House of Representatives, and the next I may do in-depth research on a select region of the world. I might monitor the social media input coming from a specific country, or focus on the latest technological developments for our biweekly newsletter. Or, more likely, I'll do it all in one day. Regardless of the day, I learn an incredible amount and have the opportunity to be in a unique environment. This experience has reassured me that I am on track towards my chosen career field, and has given me the opportunity to meet many inspiring and influential people.

One of these people is my supervisor, Katie Strifolino. In a true show of the importance of networking, Katie is a graduate from the University of New Hampshire. She has a degree in International Affairs and Political Science, with a minor in Spanish, just like I hope to receive in 2015.

She spent her study abroad experience in Barcelona, Spain, which led her to become fluent in Spanish, a skill that she utilized while working on the Latin American region for Amnesty. After graduation, she interned at Amnesty International, volunteered and eventually worked her way up to her current position as the Advocate & Science for Human Rights Project Coordinator. She, along with the rest of the Crisis Prevention and Response team, works incredibly hard to use geospatial technologies like satellite imagery to document human rights violations around the world. Their daily tasks include preventing and responding to emerging human rights developments, armed conflict situations and humanitarian crises, as well as advocating for policy and programmatic change including justice—all in line with international human rights and humanitarian law. It is fascinating to be a part of such an important and fast-paced group and to learn from their wide variety of skills and experiences. N.B. Katie will be visiting UNH and sharing her experience with students on April 1-2, visiting classes and giving a

presentation on her work (<http://unh.edu/cie/april-1-kathryn-striffolino>) as part of CIE's Happy Returns program.

As an International Affairs student, I am geared towards learning about cultures, languages and international relations. I am fascinated by different traditions, current events and people in general. I found out very quickly that D.C. is exactly where I need to be. I have friends from Mexico, Brazil, Israel and Lebanon, just to mention a few. The Washington Center has given me the opportunity to live in an amazing city, and I encourage any International Affairs majors to spend a semester here. I am now confident that I am on the right track toward a career that I am positive I love. The non-profit sector is where I want to be, and Amnesty International is proving to be a critical step. The fact that I am able to gain this experience as a sophomore has put me in a position to graduate from UNH one step ahead in the daunting job-search process. I also plan on studying abroad in a Spanish-speaking country for a semester before I graduate. I am hoping that my experience focusing primarily on Latin America and Africa through the Crisis Prevention & Response Unit at Amnesty, will guide me to my next step. Ideally, I want to be able to use the skills I am learning at Amnesty to apply for the UNH International Research Opportunities Program (IROP) and continue my research.

I can't wait to see what my last two years at UNH will bring!

Check out my Tumblr & Twitter for updates from DC: <http://whynotlovelife22.tumblr.com/> or @hwaller22. To learn more about Amnesty and the Crisis Prevention & Response team contact Katie at KStriffolino@aiusa.org or @katiestriff.

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