



Wildcats Go to Washington

One senior shares her experience at Dinner with a Wildcat

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ELLA O'LEARY '17 SHARES HER EXPERIENCE AT DINNER WITH A WILDCAT IN WASHINGTON, D.C.

As a sarcastic New Englander who loves political shoptalk, bonfires and delicious food far above what's typical at an intern's paygrade, attending Dinner With a Wildcat — an alumni-hosted dinner party for UNH students in Washington D.C. — was like going home.

Justin Herman was our lovely host, nostalgic compatriot and now, cultural attaché. Justin, a 2003 graduate of UNH, jumped at the

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opportunity to throw a line to some fellow Wildcats stumbling through the District's multifaceted personae. We enjoyed a lovely dinner and reveled, star-struck, in Justin's six degrees of separation to legislative and executive VIPs. Connecting with this alumnus has already opened doors for those of us who attended: a private tour of the World Bank? C'mon!

We look forward to building out the D.C. Wildcat network should we find ourselves flying south after graduation. In a town where networking is not only necessary to professional success but also enriching to personal growth, linking up with someone as professionally accomplished and kind as Justin was an invaluable experience.

As attendees, Josh Venuti '18 and I were introduced to this opportunity through our ever-supportive Washington Center advisor and Study-Away USA coordinator Paula DiNardo. While the [political science department](#)'s emails planted the idea of taking a semester in D.C., Paula was the one who encouraged and nurtured that idea into reality. Go Paula! (Insert applause emoji here.)

I am a senior at UNH majoring in [Russian](#) as well as political science and minoring in [international affairs](#). I applied to [The Washington Center](#), an any-semester program offered through universities and colleges across the globe, to gain some real exposure to the U.S. political landscape in a way that complements my fields of study and to get some actual work

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experience as an undergraduate. Not only did I meet those goals in my internship and professional programming, but I have also met lifelong friends from other states and countries I never would have met otherwise.

This experience has helped me get a clearer view of the job market as a whole, the structure of Congress, the opportunities available to undergraduate students and what my own preferences and aspirations are. I would absolutely recommend this experience to anyone studying political science or who has an interest in public policy.

While you're there, take advantage of great opportunities like Dinner with a Wildcat!

WRITTEN [Ella O'Leary '17](#) | UNH Tales

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