

Diamond Moorehead

Dr. Cutler

Summer Legal Fellows

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Self-Evaluation: American University, Washington College of Law

After spending four months studying abroad in South Africa and Namibia, I was eager to return to the United States, having the structure of a 9am-5pm workday, and more of a formal learning environment. I have known that I've wanted to attend law school almost my entire life, so to even have the opportunity to be fellowshipping at the Washington College of Law was huge for me, and I hoped that the experience gained this summer would really put me ahead of the millions of other students that will be applying for law school this year as well. I also really hoped to be able to take my research skills to the next level by learning how to use Westlaw and LexisNexis. More than anything, I was thrilled to be able to live in Washington, D.C. again after living there previously in the fall for the Washington Semester Program.

I arrived at WCL on June 10th and was taken on a tour of the entire school. I was stationed in the student area of their clinical program. Many of the tasks performed pertained to filing, reviewing, and/or throwing out closed cases from the different clinical programs. Even though that was not what I expected to be doing, it was quite interesting to be able to read through the Domestic Violence clinic's cases, since I aspire to be a family court judge. I got to read through statements, view photographs, and simply see how the law students carried out the cases. Something that I found interesting was that many of the clients continued to have contact with their abusers, oftentimes with children involved, all throughout their cases. There were very few cases, if any that I could recall, that the client would completely stop seeing or talking to

their partner or child's other parent. With that being said, I spent a lot of time thinking about how that affects the case and changes the outcome.

As I was introduced to various faculty and staff, my supervisor told them that if they needed any extra help that I would be available. There were a couple times that the professors of the clinical programs would email me to do small research tasks or organizing of their previous year's files. There was once that the International Human Rights clinic asked of me to do research on various organizations that aid climate refugees. Climate refugees was an area of study I had never focused on before, so it was nice to be engaging in something new and quite interesting.

Without having a specific research project or current cases to be working on, I decided to still use my time wisely by studying for the LSAT exam. Along with studying, I did extensive research on the law schools I intend to apply to and having several conversations with current law students on their admissions process and experience thus far. They all had very high reviews on the school, and not one of them said that they regretted their decision of attending. As someone who has considered applying, that gave me a great feeling of comfort. Everyone was very helpful and tried to answer all my questions the best they could.

WCL hosted several events throughout the summer and one of them I was able to go to. The Summer Institute on Education, Equity, and Justice (SIEEJ), hosted a three-day event titled, "Utilizing Antiracist Pedagogy to Transform Communities and Schools", full of profound speakers, special guest, and informative workshops. As an African American young woman, in a world that doesn't always seem to work in my favor, it was extremely encouraging to hear from such intelligent woman like Dr. Johnnetta Betsch Cole and Dr. Bettina Love share their stories

and instruct the audience on how to maneuver through this world. This was probably the best part of the fellowship for me; I even came in on a Saturday to be able to attend the last day of the event.

This was one of the first professional experiences that I was left on my own to do work individually, with little to no supervision. I believe that it pushed me to maintain my integrity by still coming into work on-time, every day, and finding things to do. It also pushed me to keep asking and showing interest in as much as possible in order to keep learning.

Despite being disappointed with the fact that not as much legal experience or major experiences took place this summer, it has showed me the type of supervisor and mentor I do not wish to be in the future. When I am in the position to teach students and assist them with their career goals, I believe that I will be very willing and adamant about helping them because I would have known what it is like to be an eager student ready to learn. I am forever grateful for even being selected and welcomed to participate in the Washington Semester Program and will encourage other student at Siena College to apply and take part in it as well. I look forward to getting back on campus and hearing the different experiences of the other students placed at the other law schools.