

2019 Summer Fellows Testimonials



Caroline Dunlap, Marquette University '21
Intern at the U.S. Department of State

Reflecting on my summer in DC, I owe many of the highlights to opportunities afforded to me by the Alexander Hamilton Society. Whether it be spending the morning in the East Wing of the White House, walking the halls of the Pentagon, or meeting some of the nation's most senior-level officials, AHS provided unwavering support and networking opportunities that allowed me to grow both personally and professionally. My internship at the U.S. Department of State was positively reinforced by AHS programming and informational activities that advanced my knowledge of international relations, economic statecraft, and national security. Many times, I found information I had learned at an AHS event being directly applicable to my work in the Office of the Secretary's Bureau for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs.

At the U.S. Department of State, I worked as an intern in the Bureau of Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs. Here, I worked directly with officials to advance public diplomacy and national security activities both at home and abroad. One of my projects included planning a reception hosted by the Secretary of State in support of the U.S. Pavilion at Expo 2020 Dubai, a global mega-event that showcases the successes of American technology, innovation, and leadership. Expo 2020 Dubai will attract over 25 million visitors, with $\frac{3}{4}$ of visitors coming from emerging markets from the Middle East, North Africa, and South Asia – particularly the Indian subcontinent. In addition to planning the Secretary's reception to encourage private-sector support for America's pavilion, I worked with strategic communication and outreach programming, including producing a multi-platform campaign to further U.S. national security and foreign policy interests.

In addition to growing cerebrally, AHS facilitated and deeply cared about my leadership skills and development. The Staff Ride in Gettysburg allowed me to step into the shoes of revered war heroes and strategize battle decisions – a lesson that not only educated me on the context of the Civil War, but opened my eyes to the brutality and tragedy of warfare – a lesson that transcends centuries and should guide all policymakers in times of battle. Book talks by prominent scholars about America's foreign policy with rival nations fostered a deeper discussion about the role of American leadership in the world. Networking receptions provided me the opportunity to debate, discuss, and deepen my understanding of a dynamic range of topics related to American prosperity. All of these activities cemented my belief about America's position in the world – a position rooted in principled leadership and passion for the great American experiment.

One of the largest benefits of being a Summer Fellow rested in meeting fellow young professionals who share common interests. In our growing information economy, learning from these talented and passionate individuals has been incomparable. I am so grateful AHS facilitated our connecting – as initial strangers have now become friends, and friends I'm sure I will work with in the future.

In total, I am incredibly grateful to have been selected as a Summer Fellow for the Alexander Hamilton Society. It is an honor to be a part of such an intelligent, well-rounded, and forward-looking group of individuals.



Lilian Isabel Ivanescu, Duke University '20
Intern at the Institute for the Study of War

Interning at the Institute for the Study of War this summer, I spent much of my time formulating and co-writing our assessment of ISIS activity in Europe from 2017-2019. I was thrilled to engage in meaningful analytical work, and it was incredibly fulfilling to track a project from early data collection to a written report. While I am returning to Duke for my final semester, I plan to continue working on the assessment for ISW remotely; I am interested to see how it evolves before possible publication. It was also great to be part of an office culture which prioritized staff learning and open discussion. In twice-weekly situation updates, different project teams reported to everyone on events happening in their area of research and provided their value-added analysis. These meetings offered me an opportunity to engage with subjects outside the scope of the team I was assigned to and stay up to date on global occurrences. I felt like I came away from each with a more nuanced understanding of events, whether in Afghanistan, Syria, or Moldova. The research team also gathered weekly for what was essentially a two-hour class focused on helping the staff understand theoretical constructs and language used by the military, so as to more effectively communicate with military personnel, or on analytical best practices and intelligence tradecraft, so as to refine analytical and forecasting skills.

The AHS Summer Series events I attended were interesting and informative. A staff ride to Gettysburg offered a new lens for a battle and emphasized the importance of both personality and terrain to the outcome of military engagements. In the book talk I attended, Angela Stent offered a new perspective on Putin's Russia to an engaged audience. And touring the West Wing with the other Summer Fellows was a rare opportunity to see something I otherwise would not have had the chance to.

It was also great to meet the other Summer Fellows and AHS members from across the country — an ideologically diverse group of students with varied interests who all nonetheless were passionate about foreign policy. The conversations I had at dinner or on the bus to Gettysburg were both interesting and fun.



Timothy Murcek, Liberty University '19
Intern in the Office of Congressman Kevin McCarthy (R-CA)

The Alexander Hamilton Society's Summer Fellowship Program afforded me the ability to pursue an extraordinary experience interning for House of Representatives Minority Leader Kevin McCarty.

Leader McCarthy's office was a very important step in my career development, as I was able to contribute to many important initiatives of interest to me and further my understanding of policymaking in Congress. Specifically, I crafted a host of research projects in tandem with Leader McCarthy's National Security Advisor dealing with a wide range of

geopolitical and defense issues. One such project involved a meeting with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky's Foreign Affairs advisor, where I prepared background information regarding current tensions in Ukraine and anticipatory actions taken by Russia in the region. The opportunity to participate in such a meeting and gain practical insight into strategic Russian goals was an important and formative experience. Further, I was given the opportunity to participate in House floor operations, legislative strategy, and leadership policymaking initiatives which helped me learn key Congressional players, rules, and tactics, which I see as imperative knowledge in the policymaking process. In addition to this critical experience, being in a Congressional leadership office opened opportunities not often available to other internship programs. I spent significant time on and around the House of Representatives floor, where I gained a sense of floor proceedings and experienced in real-time the ebb and flow of a Congressional chamber during votes and parliamentary procedures. Such experience was quite unique and incredibly valuable to my professional development.

The Alexander Hamilton Society's Fellowship Program directly provided me the financial ability to afford the cost of living and working in Washington to be able to take advantage of such a wonderful internship opportunity, and I am incredibly grateful to them for their generosity in this regard.

Beyond the grant, however, AHS put together an informative, educational, and useful summer series program that expanded my knowledge of foreign relations, economic statecraft, and national security and connected me with opportunities in this field that will be useful in my future endeavors. At the Student Leadership Conference, attendees were able to hear and learn from the experts in multiple issue areas including trade policy, defense and defense budget, and China policy. I enjoyed hearing from each of the panelists and was even able to sit down with a few of them throughout the course of the summer and discuss potential career opportunities and delve deeper into their understanding of policy. The book talk as well was a wonderful learning experience which enhanced my knowledge of policy issues which I have not previously worked with and expanded my horizons in understanding their complexities. Additionally, the closeout dinner and subsequent tours were a wonderful way to bond with other fellows and AHS staff and have a genuinely fun time in Washington.

The summer fellowship with AHS was a sincerely exceptional experience that opened a multitude of doors for me, personally, and made my D.C. summer both possible and enjoyable. I look so forward to future involvement with AHS.



Benjamin Noon, Vanderbilt University '20
Intern at RWR Advisory Group

As an Alexander Hamilton Society Summer Fellow, I've had the rare opportunity to grow professionally and intellectually in ways that I never would have imagined, making my summer in DC a completely different experience. This summer, I interned at the RWR Advisory Group, a political consulting firm. While there, I researched in the geostrategic implications of Chinese and Russian outbound investment across the world. Through the AHS Summer Fellows Program, my summer changed from a simple internship to a politics bootcamp that I'll never forget. I particularly enjoyed the series of events throughout the program and

getting the opportunity to meet and get to know the other fellows and other professionally-minded individuals in the nation's capital.

The defining feature of the Summer Fellowship Program was a fantastic lineup of engaging and exciting events hosted all around DC on different topics. From touring the West Wing to acting as a confederate general in Gettysburg, I loved every step of the way. The tours did a great job helping me understand what government service really means; I met AHS alumni working in government and learned why and how they do the work that they do. Through one-on-one conversations with professionals that have taken similar paths to the one that I would like to take, I feel much more confident in my ability to break into the world of government service.

I also learned more through the AHS Summer Fellows Program than imagined I would. Through events like Angela Stent's discussion on her book, Putin's World, I was able to continue my intellectual development through the summer. Thankfully, there's a world of organizations eager to educate students interning in DC if you look for them; AHS is one of those organizations. I'm excited to continue AHS' programming through the Virtual Seminar this year.

One of the most important aspects of the AHS Summer Fellows Program was how many people I've been able to meet in Washington this summer. By meeting the other AHS Fellows and AHS members interning in DC, I've been able to expand my network of like-minded friends looking to excel in American politics and foreign policy. AHS Summer Fellows have similar goals for themselves in the short and long term, and it's exciting to know I'll see them again the next time I'm in DC.

It's been a privilege to have the opportunity to grow professionally and intellectually through the AHS Summer Fellows Program this summer. More than giving me the opportunity to live in one of my favorite cities, it has introduced me to a world of people, places, and organizations in Washington I've been lucky to get to know. I'd like to thank everyone at AHS for this great summer; it's one that I will not forget. I'm excited for another great year of AHS at Vanderbilt!



James Quinn, Columbia University '20
Intern at the U.S. Department of Justice

The first day of my summer internship I arrived at the intern coordinator's office, expecting an orientation. Instead, she immediately whisked me up to the Department of Justice's press conference room, where Robert Mueller gave remarks about his investigation. This experience during my first hour on the job pretty much set the pace of the next two months.

I took the speechwriting internship not expecting to draft a single speech. As described to me the role was to provide research support to the attorney general's speechwriter. But he left a week and a half into my internship to take a job at the Office of the Vice President, leaving me without a supervisor for the rest of the summer. At first this required me to search for work around the office to prevent boredom from setting in. I copyedited countless releases, speeches, and memos. By the end of the summer, though, it meant that people came to rely on me to draft correspondence, media reports, and quotes for press releases in the name of Department officials. My superiors came to see me as a competent communicator capable of producing reliable high-quality work. And it meant that I was asked to draft a speech for the attorney general, giving me the opportunity to meet him and watch him rehearse it on my last day at the Department. There are few greater thrills than seeing words that you wrote appear on a teleprompter to be spoken by a cabinet official.

My summer was bookended by Mueller and Barr, but it was Hamilton that had the most consistent presence throughout. The AHS fellowship played a significant role in supporting my unpaid internship by defraying the high cost of living in Washington. This financial support was exceptionally generous, but just as important, the fellowship connected me with interesting people around Washington and opened doors to venues across town. Involvement in the fellowship's career development activities was a highlight of my summer. There's nothing more engaging than meeting a ton of people who share your interests, and, well, that's exactly what AHS helped me do. From touring the West Wing, to convening at receptions across town, these gatherings demonstrated the important role that teams play in Washington. The staff ride to Gettysburg was an excellent hands-on way to explore leadership from the perspective of military officers in the field. Dinners and happy hours with AHS members interning in DC were always a fun way to end the work day and meet new people. AHS provided me entry into a network of supremely talented students and professionals doing crucial work to protect our country and share its values with those who would benefit from them. I met friends and, likely, future colleagues alike.