Please describe your internship as you understand it, making sure to outline how you will be engaging with policy research, development, and/or implementation.

I will be working in the State Department’s Western Hemisphere Affairs (WHA) Office of Policy Planning and Coordination (PPC). This office addresses all crosscutting issues that are not specific to any one region in the hemisphere such as migration, human rights, and democracy. It is the interface of all of the more specific regional offices and the liaison to outside State. For example, all major WHA reports go through PPC and PPC coordinates WHA with the United Nations, other international organizations, think tanks, and the legislature. The office even works with embassies in the region to garner UN votes and develop recommendations for the hemisphere at the annual UN General Assembly. As a summer intern, I will be preparing for this year’s General Assembly, which takes place every fall. This work will entail attending meetings within State and also on the Hill, writing research memos, writing talking notes, and collaborating with other WHA offices. I will also help to respond to current events in the hemisphere like influxes of migration (which spike in the summer) by providing research and reports on the situation.

Please explain your short-term and long-term goals. How will this internship help you achieve these goals? Why is this internship a good fit for your personal vision?

This internship is an essential component of my academic and personal trajectory. In the short-term, I hope to better understand how US policy towards Latin America is decided and implemented, how the State Department interacts with US embassies for information, and broadly how the US manages relations with its neighbors. I have a strong academic interest in US-Latin American relations and diplomacy. I am currently applying to the CDDRL honors program to write a thesis on US-Mexico relations and believe that my internship could help shape my research topic. I also hope that this internship will provide me with a better understanding of my own career preferences following graduation. To achieve my long-term goal of working in public service and policy, I want to see what working in a regional bureau of the State Department entails. After researching trends in peace and violence in Mexico last summer, I realized that data analysis and quantitative research, though important to policy, is too indirect and impersonal for me. By trying new types of work, I gain perspective on my strengths, weaknesses, and preferences. I now believe it is necessary for me to try federal government work before anything else. I plan to apply for law school and would be interested in working as a State Department lawyer. I am invested in US actions abroad and want to hold my country like all countries accountable for its actions around the world. I find that the best way to be patriotic is by being critical. Although I will not be working under the administration that I expected to work under, I believe that being patriotically critical now is more important than ever especially in regards to foreign policy. I expect to learn a great deal and witness a truly historic moment in the shaping of US relations and foreign policy.
Please list any courses, experiences, and skills relevant to your internship. Then, in a paragraph, please explain why this background prepares you to have a successful and formative internship this summer.


Experiences: Community Health in Oaxaca BOSP summer trip; BOSP quarter abroad in Santiago, Chile; Mexico Research Intern at Institute for Economics and Peace

Skills: Policy memo writing; Spanish speaking, reading writing; English-Spanish translation; report writing; knowledge of Latin American history and politics; expertise on Mexican security and policing; data analysis

I expect my classwork, experiences abroad, and past internship to provide me with helpful background information on both US government and the regional focus of the bureau, the Western Hemisphere. Within international relations, I have focused heavily on Latin American studies so I understand the history and current politics of many countries I may be researching and working with. I am familiar with important issues like migration, democracy, and human rights in the Americas. Moreover, I look forward to using my extensive academic and professional background in Spanish. During my last summer internship, I learned how to work well individually and on a professional team. I also conducted research and data analysis for a 60-page report, “Informe Nuevo León 2016.” This report, which I contributed to significantly through research, writing, editing, and translation, was the main product of my summer work and will certainly help prepare me for research and writing at the State Department. Finally, I frequently presented my work orally and in the form of memos to my superiors so I feel comfortable with short deadlines and conveying my research which will be essential this summer.

Essay Prompt

In one to two paragraphs, address some or all of the following questions:

- Why are you passionate about the work the organization does?
- Why are you interested in policy and public service?
- How do you plan to continue to engage in policy or public service following this internship?

I look forward to interning with the State Department because I am committed to public service and the United State’s role as both leader and neighbor. After years of studying history and political science in school and months spent learning and researching outside the United States, I feel ready to explore my passions through a more policy-focused lens at home. I seek to gain insight related to US foreign policy and relations as well as better understand my own career aspirations. Working with the Western Hemisphere Affairs Bureau particularly excites me because I have focused my studies and research largely on Latin America. I have taken numerous classes on Latin American culture, politics, and history. In my classes on US foreign policy and diplomacy, I have focused on US relations with Latin American countries. This relationship interests me because the
Americas are deeply interconnected economically, culturally, and historically. Last quarter when I studied abroad in Santiago, Chile, living with a host family and taking classes with Chilean professors deepened my understanding of this connection. I am not proud of many of our past actions in Chile and Latin America, but I am optimistic about our ability to move forward and try to rectify history through continued dialogue. As an intern, I want to be a part of this dialogue and see first hand how my country engages with its allies and neighbors.

I developed a passion for learning about Latin America long before college. Growing up in San Diego County just forty miles from the border with Mexico, I realized early on that the United States and Mexico have a crucial relationship. My community is tied to Mexico in beautiful and difficult ways through culture and migration. Speaking Spanish has allowed me to better understand my neighbors in San Diego and south of the border. After spending a month in Oaxaca and then researching Mexico in depth as an intern with the Institute for Economics and Peace, I am more intrigued than ever by Mexico’s complexity and diversity. Now that I have lived in Chile, I can say that this diversity is reflected across Latin America. My time living in Latin America has underlined firsthand the impact of United States culture and policy for me. How do we manage such responsibility? How can we improve life for our neighbors while balancing our interests? After studying this issue academically, professionally, and personally, these are questions that I am ready to explore through government. Hopefully, then, I will understand if government, and specifically the State Department, is a fulfilling public service path and if going to law school would further my impact on policy.