



CCU students spent time in D.C. through INTEL program

From a news release

Ten Coastal Carolina University students in the intelligence and national security studies program participated in the National Intelligence Studies (NIS) Study Away program this past summer.

The summer experiential learning course included a three-week visit to Washington, D.C., where students visited several government agencies and think tanks, and explored graduate schools in the area.

The students who participated, all intelligence and national security studies majors, are Sandra Ataalla, Dylan Daige-Goodfield, Daniella Gladstein, Ryan Houle, Conrad Kodjanian, Michael Oligino, Nicholas SanNicola, Preston Schaefer, Alana Tellier and Victoria Williams.

The students were accompanied by Rick Kilroy, associate professor, and LaMesha Craft, lecturer, both in the Department of Politics who teach intelligence and national security studies courses.

Craft joined CCU this year after 20 years as an intelligence analyst.

"In my opinion, this is one of the best opportunities for students to gain real-world experience of working in the intelligence community and living in the Washington, D.C., area," she said.

Students visited the National Counterterrorism Center (NCTC) at the Office of the Director of National Intelligence (ODNI) and participated in a simulation exercise designed to test their abilities to work in groups, identify a threat, and provide an assessment to a decision maker.

Houle, a graduating senior, said the feedback from the intelligence professionals was extremely helpful.

"During our visit to the National Counterterrorism Center, they really took the time to help us prepare for a career in the field of intelligence, as well as helping us construct our resumes," he said.

Joseph Maguire, the acting director of national intelligence, commented that he was not aware of any other college in the country that had such a summer program.

"I wish I'd had this opportunity when I was in college - you're getting an opportunity to visit so many agencies!" Maguire told the students.

Students also toured the U.S. Capitol and visited the Senate Gallery, where topics such as amending the National Defense Authorization Act to designate funding for elections security were addressed.

Additionally, students met with Senator Tim Scott of South Carolina on the Capitol steps and presented him with a CCU T-shirt.

As part of the course, the students worked in teams to write national intelligence estimates on five respective problem sets.

The teams briefed their findings to one of the head instructors from the Department of Homeland Security Intelligence Training Academy. He provided students with feedback on how to provide "the bottom line up front" to decision makers that will ultimately depend on their analysis.

While the students visited more than 11 agencies, including the CIA and FBI, two think tanks, and four universities, they still found time to enjoy Washington, D.C. They visited the Library of Congress, the International Spy Museum, a variety of other museums and monuments, Arlington Cemetery, and toured the National Mall at night.

Additionally, the students enjoyed dinner with several CCU alumni who work for intelligence agencies in D.C. Our alumni provided insight for job searching, networking, and how important it is to "just get your foot in the door."

"Not many undergraduates can say they toured the CIA headquarters, visited the Pentagon, or met with the South Carolina senator at the Capitol," said Ataalla, a sophomore. "The information gained from this program was way more than I anticipated. It helped me gain a better understanding of what the intelligence world looks like, and gave me a clear idea of what interests/disinterests me. The feedback from the intelligence professionals that spoke to us greatly affected my understanding of the community. Every government agency is unique, and before this trip I grouped all of the intelligence fields together."

Tellier, a junior, noted the value of networking during this program. "Many of the individ-



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INTEL students had the opportunity to meet with Senator Tim Scott and visit several government agencies and think tanks during their three weeks in Washington, D.C.

uals we met with provided us with emails and business cards, encouraging us to reach out" she said.

Kodjanian, a sophomore, said he would recommend this trip to other intelligence students "because you get to see which agencies you'd like to work for, and discover whether or

not you'd like to work within the intelligence community."

The program has already received funding for next year. For any questions or to learn more about the next NIS Study Away opportunity, contact Kilroy at rkilroy@coastal.edu or Craft at lcrafft@coastal.edu.

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