

Michigan Apprenticeship Program Reflection

Doug Roehler, 2010

The Michigan Apprenticeship Program was an opportunity of a lifetime. It was one that I will be able to carry with me and reflect back on throughout the remainder of my career, both here at the University of Michigan and in my future endeavors.

To begin, even before I left for Atlanta, I had multiple phone and E-mail conversations with Dr. Grant Baldwin. He wanted to ensure that I would get the most out of my very short time at the CDC. He also wanted to fashion my trip in a way that would be mutually beneficial for both his staff and me. Once he learned my objectives, he was able to schedule a day packed full of 30-minute meetings with some key players from his staff, as well as others around the CDC.

Upon arriving in Atlanta, I was put up in a very nice hotel, just a short cab ride from the CDC campus. Dr. Baldwin greeted me at the front gates of the CDC. He whisked me into the building for I had a full day of meetings scheduled.

One of my first meetings was with the deputy director of the Division of Unintentional Injury Prevention (DUIP). He provided a great introduction to the division, as well as how I could take the most from each of my subsequent meetings. Then I was invited to the weekly DUIP senior staff meeting. This was a nice opportunity for me to get a behind the scenes perspective of how a federal agency operates on a daily basis. At this time I learned some of the challenges the division was facing, as well as some of their recent accomplishments.

Subsequent events included 30-60 minute meetings with key players in the field of injury prevention. I had in-depth conversations with the researchers whom I had had spent hours upon hours reading about in class. I was able to probe them regarding their career trajectories, research interests, educational experiences, what life is like working at a federal agency, and interests they have outside of the office. The researchers seemed to be as interested in me as I was in them. I believe this was representative of the environment and atmosphere at the Division of Unintentional Injury Prevention. The office seemed not to be competitive and cutthroat, but rather collaborative, with people willing to extend a hand when a deadline is approaching.

At the end of the day, Dr. Baldwin and I went out to coffee to reminisce about life in Ann Arbor, the current culture at the School of Public Health, and football seasons from the past.

My short visit to the CDC provided very valuable insights and lessons learned. I look forward to applying these lessons and learning even more in upcoming months during my summer internship at the DUIP.