

## **TACL 2007 Summer Political Internship Program Final Overview**

I attended the 2007 Taiwanese American Citizens League Summer Political Internship Program, and it was an extremely rewarding experience. This was an educational and leadership-building opportunity designed to foster second-generation Taiwanese Americans' political involvement through working in offices of local and national level public officials. In addition to the work-related activities, the program supplemented various events that educate me on Taiwanese American issues, which encompass from local to state-level matters.

For the past eight weeks, I served as an intern in U.S. Senator Barbara Boxer's Los Angeles office. During the internship, I worked on a wide range of clerical tasks, including, but not limited to, answering phone calls, organizing press clippings, preparing constituent correspondence, and updating contact lists for local government officials and agencies. While at times the clerical works may seem repetitive and tedious, these experiences are the very crucial elements that molded me to become an assertive and well-informed individual. The experience of answering constituents' phone calls, for instance, had pushed me out of my comfort zone and changed my viewpoints on several controversial issues. Though I acknowledged that the ability to initiate and carry a conversation is an essential trait for many professions, I was very reluctant and often attempted to avoid conversations with strangers. However, answering phone calls provided a perfect opportunity for me to break out of my shell. With persistent assistance and encouragement from my office intern coordinator, I was able to overcome my fear and shyness after many practices of handling calls from constituents. Moreover, by listening to constituents' concerns and viewpoints, this experience allowed me to gain a deeper understanding of current issues and legislations that affect our lives, and in many ways, broaden my perspectives and aroused my interest in American politics.

Along with the daily work related activities from my office, perhaps the most memorable and valuable experience of the internship program was the Sacramento lobbying trip, in which the interns worked collectively to promote Assembly Bill 295, a bill that enhances the quality of life for Taiwanese Americans. While this trip had provided first hand experience to participate in the formation of policies, we had opportunities to learn from each other through the diverse backgrounds and upbringings from each intern. I was fortunate to have five other interns who had worked diligently to put together the lobbying projects. Although at times each intern might offer different viewpoints, I learned how to accept their difference and contribute my own opinions to enrich the overall working experience. Each intern had put in great efforts to make this lobbying project possible, and I am safe to assume without the contribution from all the interns, this experience will be incomplete. All in all, I am thankful to TACL for providing such a unique experience for every intern to come together to learn and develop, while simultaneously allowing me to be a direct representative of the Taiwanese American community.

On the personal level, I am grateful to be given this opportunity and to be a part of the TACL family. In this past summer, I have made friends with both the interns as well as the mentors. Though the mentors were assigned for the sole purpose of providing assistance throughout the internship experience, they have also acted as counselors and offered advices for a wide range of circumstances. Furthermore, while these mentors have come from different backgrounds, their dedicated service for the summer internship program have provided a life-

changing experience for me and inspired me to seek for my potential and to utilize it effectively for the future of Taiwanese American community. Although the summer political internship program has come to an end, it certainly has made a great impact in my life and offered numerous options for my future. And someday, I would like to return to TACL Summer Internship Program and be a mentor for the future generations of Taiwanese American, bringing them the same unique experience and opportunities that I had encountered through this program.