

Nora Vedder
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Barron Collier High School
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Art-filled coffee shops, bustling streets, and timeless museums have made our nation's capital a must-see hub for tourists. Yet, my one week institute at Georgetown University allowed me to gain a much deeper appreciation for the critical international relationships and political processes that are headquartered in Washington D.C.

Upon arriving at the Hilltop, enthusiastic lectures on subjects ranging from Russia to ISIS, as well as insightful discussions with current undergraduates from the Walsh School of Foreign Service, invited students to feel welcomed and involved. These learning opportunities were accompanied with detailed questions for the distinguished professors followed by engaging conversations in small groups. Overall, I left the institute with a basic understanding of predicaments facing our global system, including healthcare, terrorism, and technology.

Although the majority of note taking and listening took place in the classroom, the institute included trips so students could intimately grasp foreign relation concepts. My favorite outing was the informative briefing with Florida Congressman Francis Rooney at the Capitol Building, especially because students from Naples, the district he represents, were able to shake his hand, snap a picture, and sit in the front row. In addition, a visit to the Swedish Embassy encompassed a unique tour and rooftop view of the Potomac River. All in all, off-campus experiences provided real world exposure to diplomacy and global policy.

Finally, the ample time allotted to explore the surrounding Georgetown community cemented a memorable week. The abundance of restaurants, shops, and bakeries - including the well-known Georgetown Cupcakes - were only a short walk from campus. Furthermore, meeting people from diverse backgrounds contributed to the intellectual environment of the University. Walking around the town and conversing with students from all walks of life enriched my views of the world, while also creating enduring memories.

With my senior year and the daunting college application process quickly approaching, I am grateful for the opportunity to have been able to explore my interest in international affairs at the breathtaking Georgetown University. The knowledge gained from this institute has opened my eyes to a realm of global viewpoints on current events and possible career paths.