

J.J. Tolentino

AE'22

ASF Summer Enrichment Report

Once again, I thank the Sigma Foundation for providing the opportunity for me to offer my full potential to my internship and not have worry about the financial burdens of the COVID-19 pandemic. My internship with The Borgen Project allowed me to truly grow as a professional and has sparked new inspiration in my undergraduate experience.

The educational value of my internship experience cannot be understated. The Borgen Project allowed me to engage in the political process from an angle I had previously not explored. The first-hand exposure with Congressional leaders through various advocacy meetings, enabled me to get a better understanding of how these decision-makers operate. As a Public Policy and Political Science double major this newly found insight will prove beneficial to me in not only my undergraduate experience but into my career as well. Additionally, I was able to learn a lot about global poverty and how domestic legislation can combat the growing problem in light of the ongoing pandemic. This international scope has given me a much better understanding of how U.S. Foreign Aid is distributed and budgeted. This knowledge and personal experience will allow me to excel when examining international politics in the classroom.

In addition to just academic knowledge, The Borgen Project gave me the opportunity to achieve and surpass a number of goals. These goals include: meeting with the offices of four Congressional Leaders (earning the President's Circle Award), mobilizing 50+ people to reach out to Congress in favor of poverty reduction legislation, presenting on behalf of the Borgen Project to classes and community organizations, as well as fundraising \$755, shattering my

initial goal of \$500. These goals allowed me to sharpen skills that are necessary in my field. These skills include: public speaking, community outreach, fundraising, mobilization techniques, and most importantly how to properly advocate for disadvantaged groups around the globe.

My internship experience with The Borgen Project has grown not only my own personal confidence, but my determination to be a leader on campus and in the community. Through my work this summer, I was inspired to create a new campus organization. I realized that there is a disconnect between UNC, the Chapel Hill-Carrboro community, and the decision makers creating policy. In order to bridge this gap, I am working to create a new student organization named “Campus Voice Coalition” (aka CiViC). Through advocacy, research, and mobilization this group will seek to make government and government officials more accessible to those in the community who seek positive policy change. My leadership group includes current members of Alpha Sigma as well as colleagues from The Borgen Project.

Without my internship experience with The Borgen Project, I may not have found the inspiration or the connections to make CiViC possible. The Alpha Sigma Foundation made this incredible experience possible with their generosity and I cannot thank you all enough. With the Summer Enrichment Scholarship, I was able to put all my time and energy into my advocacy work. Without a doubt, this experience with The Borgen Project has given me valuable skills for my educational and life long success. Thank you.

YITB,

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