



Yale College
Center for International & Professional Experience

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Summer Experience with U.S. Department of State

This summer, I spent 11 weeks working in the Office of Global Health Diplomacy at the U.S. Department of State in Washington, DC. As a hopeful future foreign policy maker considering a career in the Foreign Service, this internship provided me with invaluable experience that has shaped my future career goals and expanded my understanding of the State Department and America's goals and interests concerning international development.

The Office of Global Health Diplomacy (S/GHD) is the domestic office that serves as a liaison and coordination mechanism between all of the US government agencies who work on health abroad – USAID, CDC, PEPFAR, USDA, HHS, etc. During my summer as a policy intern, I worked on a variety of projects, primarily in the areas of Embassy support and training.

In June, our office partnered with the Chinese government to bring together high-level health officials from the US and China to discuss collaboration on non-communicable diseases during the annual China People-to-People Exchange, which drew many high-profile attendees and speakers including Secretary of State John Kerry, Secretary of the Treasury Jacob Lew, and their equivalents in the Chinese government. In preparation for this event, I conducted research and compiled fact sheets and briefing materials for our speakers, created and reviewed presentations, and assisted with event operations. As we moved into July, I had the opportunity to coordinate with other USG agencies to prepare pre-departure health briefings for the new U.S. Ambassador to South Sudan and others in her team, as well as work with the S/GHD senior policy advisors to organize a three-day global health course at the Foreign Service Institute for Foreign Service Officers who are interested in integrating health into their diplomatic agendas. Finally, a large part of my final weeks has been dedicated to reviewing Integrated Country Strategies, the plans for the next two years put forth by Embassies in every country, and making policy recommendations about how the Missions can better align their health-related goals with the USG's health priorities.

My main goal for this summer was to compare and contrast the work that is being done on health by the Department of State with the work that is being done by USAID, where I worked last summer. This internship has been an excellent opportunity to do just that, although my office is less action-based and more coordination-based than my office was at USAID. I also hoped to use this summer to further explore what it would look like to have a career in the Foreign Service and decide whether or not that was the right career path for me. It has been difficult to achieve this goal because our office was in a period of transition this summer and we were staffed entirely by Civil Service Officers so I had to reach out to people outside of our office to get insight about a Foreign Service career. Still, I met many helpful people through volunteering for different events and attending panels and was able to learn a lot more about what a career in the USG will entail.

I would like to thank the sponsors of this fellowship who made this incredible learning experience possible for me. It has been a remarkable summer and I have no doubt that everything I learned here will help me tremendously as I move forward in my academic and professional career.