

Tulane junior cherished summer as a White House intern

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Tulane junior Caroline Sanders, left, spent the summer of 2024 as a White House intern. Next to her is her mother, Beth Bernstein, a South Carolina legislator who inspired her daughter's interest in politics.

Caroline Sanders, a junior at Tulane University, grew up in politics. When she was 8 years old, her mother ran for office in South Carolina, winning a seat in the state House of Representatives. She accompanied her mom as she knocked on doors in the district, and as a teenager, helped pass out flyers and register voters at three

high schools.

“I’ve grown up understanding the importance of public service and giving back to the community,” she said.

Her love of politics took her to Tulane, where she is majoring in history and political science in the School of Liberal Arts. Sanders added to her already impressive resumé this past summer when she spent 10 weeks as a White House intern.

It was the experience of a lifetime, she said, and only furthered her desire to pursue a career in politics and law. “The internship also gave me a glimpse of what it would be like to work for the federal government.”

Sanders was selected for the highly competitive internship in April, following a lengthy application process that included essay writing, recommendation submissions, Zoom interviews and a background check. “Finally, in April, I received the formal offer to participate in the program,” she said. “I was super excited.”

During the application process, she was given a list of 25 departments from which she could choose to work. She decided on the Office of Public Engagement, which is responsible for coordinating and creating dialogue between the American public and the administration. She was assigned to the Coalitions and Events and Programming teams.

“I worked on various tasks with the goal of improving and encouraging communication between the administration and communities around the nation,” she said. Her assignments included assisting with meetings, drafting briefing documents, coordinating events for stakeholders and working on weekly communication emails.

“While the days were long — I worked 40+ hours a week — it was extremely rewarding work,” she said.

Although she didn’t have any personal interactions with President Joe Biden or Vice President Kamala Harris, she saw them at various events around the White House, and Harris greeted her and a small group of interns at the Fourth of July celebration on the White House lawn.

"I now have a special appreciation for the phrase 'a chain is only as strong as its weakest link.' If I am able to make even the slightest difference for someone else, I now understand how it can make an impact on a larger scale."

Sanders is now in Cambridge, England, where she is studying political economy as part of a semester-abroad program at Cambridge University. She will return to Tulane in January with three semesters left until she graduates in 2026. She then plans to attend law school.

"My classes at Tulane have provided me with a solid foundation to prepare me for my future goal," she said. "Tulane's emphasis on the importance of civil service also coincided with my objectives as a White House intern. I believe Tulane's motto "not for oneself, but for one's own" is the best way to approach public service."

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