

Intro: Welcome to career talks a podcast service of the Academic Services Office of the Sam Nunn School of International Affairs we are here with Aarij Abbas.

Host: Tell us a little bit about yourself your name, major, year, where you're from and why you chose to come to Sam Nunn School of International Affairs.

Aarij: Sure, so it's good to be here. My name is Aarij, I am a fourth year now with a major in Economics and International Affairs. I studied abroad in the European Union on Dr. Birchfield's Brussels program. I am from Roswell, Georgia originally. And I chose Sam Nunn because I always liked Georgia Tech as a school and I was really attracted to the combination of technology and liberal arts that school has to offer.

Host: So we're here to talk about your experience as a Legislative Intern with Georgia Link Public Affairs Group. Can you tell us how you found out about this position and what the application process was like?

Aarij: Sure so I found out about this position through a friend of mine actually who interned there the previous legislative session. And she really enjoyed the experience and so I kind of asked her to you know help me do my application and send it in. And the application process was really just sending my resume to their person in charge of hiring interns and then one interview with a few of the partners at the firm and then a few weeks later they got back to me with an offer. So it's relatively simple as far as applications processes go.

Host: Ok cool, what was your typical workday like?

Aarij: So most of the time because we're on the schedule of the Georgia General Assembly I would get there around 8:00am. I would check the list of committee meetings to see what we were tracking because part of my job was letting all partners know when certain committee meetings were happening. So that involves calling offices of committee chairmen and confirming meeting times as well as checking the e-mailing lists and website to determine what meetings have been added. So that process was a little tricky because sometimes you get something on the website but it's not on your e-mail or only the secretary knows about it and she hasn't posted to the website yet. After that, we would head down to the State House and I would sit in on one of the early committee meetings in the morning, the Rules Committee Meeting, where all the bills for the next legislative day get decided what's going to be discussed on the House floor. One of my other interns would sit in a Senate version of that. Then after that the session begins which usually takes it can take anywhere from an hour to all day depending on what kind of agenda is set for the day and then once the session was over, there be more committee meetings. And most days around four or five we would call it but then there were certain days that we would stay till midnight or one because the agenda for that day was very intensive and the state house had a deadline they had to meet. So yeah, that's the typical day.

Host: Wow, I guess it varies depending on the day

Aarij: It does, yeah.

Host: What did you find most enjoy about this experience?

Aarij: So I really enjoyed the fast pace environment and the dependency on personal relationships that this kind of career has because the lobbying firm I worked for there spent years building relationships. And that's kind of what they used to do the work that their clients asked them to and it was all very quick you have to be the first one to know everything which is why they rely on interns so much because we can keep track of little things, like when committee meetings are and what's been changed and what the agenda is. And so I really enjoyed how fast how everything moves so quickly and then just how important it is to have these personal relationships and be in the know all times.

Host: How did Georgia Tech or the Nunn School prepare you for this internship?

Aarij: So I think probably the biggest way and then school prepared me was just in terms of the coursework in my classes a lot of it was research based and policy based. And so really just understanding policy, what certain bills mean for different industries and how the process of getting a bill passed ties into you know the lobbying efforts of certain bills. Because that's really what a lot of the classes focus on maybe not on a domestic level but on the international level which is the same game on a bigger scale. I think that would be the best way the Nunn School prepared me in terms and in terms of just basic office skills writing and research and Microsoft Excel things like that.

Host: Any advice for interested students applying?

Aarij: So I think the best advice I would have is don't knock it till you try it because I didn't have a very high opinion of state politics until I did this internship and it really changed. It gave me a new career option because it was a very interesting internship and I could definitely see myself pursuing a career in state politics. The other piece is you definitely have to be take an active interest in policymaking and legislative affairs. As well as you have to have a strong attention to detail because that's one of the most important things I learned on this, during this internship is how important little things are that might not to you but they matter to the people that you're preparing your documents for so you really have to be careful with that.

Host: So what's next for you?

Aarij: Well right now I'm taking classes and in the fall I plan to do the same. I'm trying to get on to a Governor campaign, get some experience and campaigning for the next few semesters. And I've just picked up a biology minor so I'll be focusing on that in case I want to do a Masters of Public Health after college.

Host: Well we wish you luck with that and that concludes or interview thank you for sharing your insight and expertise with our audience today.

Aarij: Thank you.

Outro: This has been career talks a podcast of the Sam Nunn School of International Affairs at Georgia Tech brought to you by the Nunn School academic services this and other podcast can be found on our website at www.inta.gatech.edu. Thank you for listening.