THE CHANGE I WANTED TO BRING

Arizona Democratic Fellowship Internship
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Let's Get Down to Business

My first foray into the workforce was with the Arizona Democratic Fellowship. It was a campaign group with the sole task of getting as many Democrats elected as possible in order to represent Arizona.

I was working under the Pima County division. On August 21 was my first official day as an intern. My supervisors, Allie and Emiliano wasted no time to get me ready and out the door to make a difference. They gave me the necessary tools to start conversations and inspire people like myself to go out and make that difference possible.

Before I started my internship, I hated how political discourse amongst my peers was devolved into nothing but complaining and pointing fingers. They wanted things to change down in Washington yet without participating in the process such as voting.

I knew that I needed to do my part to see the changes that I wanted. I had to be the change I wanted to see. The Fellowship gave me that opportunity to learn how to make difference not only the political spectrum but every endeavor I will have moving forward.

Photo Left: The Pima County Fellows
The Task at Hand

The jobs that required of me all involved excellent communication skills. For me to garner action from potential voters, I needed to be confident and passionate. Nobody will be inspired by someone that is boring and uninspired himself. One of my jobs required me to go out in high traffic areas such as University of Arizona’s Student Union or the streets of downtown.

I was tasked to register voters and sign citizens up for the early voting list (voting by mail). My other job was phone banking would require me to make calls and try to get my fellow democrats to volunteer to help spread the word to get citizens to vote democrat. Then my internship would have me perform miscellaneous task such as making webpages to promote rallies that the democrats were hosting. Other times they had me participate in democratic events in order to recruit more citizens to volunteer.

Eventually our focused moved way from broadly gaining support for democrats, to spear heading individual candidate’s campaigns. We were tasked with campaigning for David Garcia for governor and Kyrsten Sinema for Senate. This would heavily dictate how I perform my main job, canvassing.
Even though all my other jobs were important to the democratic campaign, The Get Out to Vote initiative took top priority throughout the Democratic party in its entirety. Canvassing became my number one task throughout my internship. Canvassing is when I go door to door, neighborhood by neighborhood to knock doors and ask the residents if they are registered to vote and if they are voting democratic. On the surface it seems like a relatively easy task but throughout the campaign, it proved to be more challenging than I have expected.
Canvassing initially started simple enough. I got into my car and drove to the neighborhood that was listened on my packet. Each residence had a checklist that I had to fill out. It was to determine whether the citizen was home or not and whether they were supporting democrats.

Yet, canvassing started to be complicated when there is a myriad of variables. Example of this was a residence having dogs in their front yard without signs indicating that they are present. There have been several instances where residences had guard dogs sleeping or hiding from site. I would open their gate to enter their front yard in order to ring the doorbell. Yet, I would find pit bulls sleeping on the porch or german shepherds emerging from under the residence car. In those circumstances, I would simply back off slowly and mark the residence checklist as “inaccessible”. This was a frequent issue when I was canvassing in urban neighborhoods.

Hell, or High Water
The Change

When November came around, it was the final stretch. Packets have doubled in size and election was ending. This is where all the fellowship's hard work was really going to pay off and it did. Even though Garcia lost the election to Doug Ducey, we managed to get Krysten Sinema elected. Arizona hasn’t had democratic senator in over thirty years let alone a female senator. Yet, we did it. Countless other volunteers and I ushered in the change we wanted to see. It wasn’t done by complaining on social media. It was done by boots on the ground and hours of hard work.

The things I learned in this internship are invaluable. It taught me that things are not always going to go according to plan. There are going tough days, but the job still needs to get done. That lesson took some getting used to, but I am extremely thankful for learning it nonetheless. I am not better equipped to access situations, adapt, and plan accordingly. Most importantly this internship validated my ideology. For me have the change I seek, I need to become it. I can’t thank everyone in the fellowship enough for preparing me for my next future endeavors.