

Marie Pichay  
Center of Civility & Democratic Engagement Fellow, Fall 2017

In the fall of 2017 I had the opportunity to participate in the University of California in Washington, D.C. program. During my time in D.C. I took two courses: the General Research Seminar and Economics and Public Policy elective. My coursework in D.C. allowed me to develop my research and writing skills while gaining a deeper understanding of the relationship between economics and public policy.

I interned at the German Marshall Fund (GMF), where I was a part of the Urban and Regional Policy team. I had the opportunity to research autonomous vehicle legislation in the United States and Europe; I co-wrote a report for the Department of State benchmarking the success of our fellowship program called YTILI; and I co-wrote a published blog about the social and economic benefits of adaptive reuse. However, the highlight of my internship experience was participating in GMF's annual policy dialogue conference called BUILD, which took place in Detroit. At BUILD, I was able to engage with planners from around the world and learn about the relationship between urban planning and civility/democratic engagement through workshops that encouraged inclusive engagement and participatory planning. As an aspiring urban planner, it was invaluable to learn about key challenges and opportunities in engaging community.

During the orientation for UCDC, Director Helen Shapiro told us that many students describe their time in DC as "transformative". After completing the program, I wholeheartedly agree. I am grateful for the Center of Civility & Democratic Engagement, as this fellowship helped make this transformative UCDC experience possible.