

Rosenberg Foundation Summary Report

I would like to begin my summary report by thanking the Rosenberg Foundation for agreeing to generously support my work at AIPAC this summer and financially enabling me to undertake my internship. As both a Jewish and Israeli student at Cambridge University in the United Kingdom, the issues of combating hatred and antisemitism, with an emphasis on college age students, two of the Rosenberg Foundation's primary objectives are especially relevant to me. While I have never been directly faced with antisemitism on campus, I have unfortunately experienced hatred, especially in relation to Israel. This has happened on a number of occasions, from "Israel Apartheid Week" to a number of protests I personally experienced on campus. I have found that the majority of hatred towards Israel that I have faced on campus comes from people who are misinformed, while very few people actually have a true understanding of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. One of my goals as an Israel activist on campus is to make sure that people are better informed, without attempting to sway their opinion in one direction or another. If a lack of access to accurate information leads to unnecessary hatred, then I believe that it is my job as a student to ensure that people have access to the information necessary to make independent, informed and balanced decisions regarding Israel. It should be noted, that from my experience, many times peoples' opinion on Israel, reflects on how they feel about Jews. I therefore see a direct connection between helping better inform people about Israel and combating hatred and antisemitism towards Jews on college campuses. One of my primary interests when accepting my internship at AIPAC was to further my personal abilities to be both an Israel advocate on campus as well as simultaneously combatting both antisemitism and hatred of all kinds on my own college campus. I believe that my summer internship at the AIPAC New York office helped prepare me for this mission on a number of level which I will expand upon in this report, namely by means of the department that I was assigned to, Synagogue Initiative, my attending the Diamond Summer Intern National Retreat and the Saban Leadership Conference as well as the 2016 AIPAC New York Intern and Young Professional Event that I helped plan and execute.

The department that I was assigned to at the New York office, which deals primarily with fundraising and community outreach, was the Synagogue Initiative department. This department is a relatively new one (approximately 5 years old) and came about based on an understanding at AIPAC regarding the importance that synagogues and Rabbis can play in influencing peoples' individual commitment to the pro-Israel mission. Part of my daily responsibilities included liaising with a wide variety of community leaders as well as developing strategies on how to engage different communities in the New York area. This included a wide range of communities from the Orthodox to the more progressive and liberal communities. What I found particularly useful for my own work on campus is understanding how to better tailor my own message to the various types of people I may be engaging with. Coming from an Orthodox home and identifying as modern orthodox, it was very interesting for me to see how AIPAC engages with people from different Jewish backgrounds while ultimately promoting the same pro-Israel message. This is particularly important on a college campus where many individuals I am in contact with come from different backgrounds and consequently identify with different messages. If I am to be successful in my own campus work, informing the uninformed and consequently combating oth

hatred and antisemitism, it is imperative to understand the different messages that resonate with members of different communities.

Another fantastic opportunity I had at AIPAC, was attending two fascinating conferences in Washington, DC. These were the Diamond Summer Intern National Retreat as well as the Saban Leadership Conference. Both conferences were aimed at college age students and provided me with two very important opportunities. The first of these was the ability to network and interact with students from a wide array of college campuses and discuss with them the various challenges that they face on a daily basis on campus as well as discuss the strategies that they employ in order to face these challenges. It was amazing how similar the challenges were as well as very refreshing and encouraging to hear the different success stories people have had combating antisemitism, hatred and anti-Israel sentiment on their respective campuses. I was also very pleasantly surprised to learn about and hear from the non-Jewish students involved in this work and why they find it important enough to dedicate their time to this cause. This included representatives of the Evangelical, Hispanic and African American communities. One cannot emphasize how important it is that pro-Israel advocacy and battling antisemitism not become an exclusively Jewish cause. Secondly, the training workshops and speeches that AIPAC organized provided me with a lot of material for my own personal work on campus and help me fine tune my own objectives. Hearing speakers such as Middle East Scholar Aaron David Miller and former state representative Bakari Sellers was extremely helpful in formulating my own strategy for campus activism. I plan on maintaining the professional relationships I developed at these two conferences which I believe will be instrumental in furthering my own work on campus this year. One cannot overstate the importance of having a network of contacts facing similar challenges on campus to run ideas by as well as develop strategies with.

An additional learning experience I had during my AIPAC internship which I believe will be extremely helpful in my work on campus next year has been organizing an event for interns and young professionals in the tristate area. My responsibilities included securing a speaker, arranging a wide range of logistical concerns (from securing a venue to ordering refreshments), managing the event budget as well as inviting participants. This is not something that I have had the chance to do prior to this internship. The event was a great success and attracted over 100 participants from many different backgrounds, including interns at consulates, Jewish organizations and young professionals in the fields of politics, finance and hi-tech. This invaluable hands on practical experience will be vital to me next year as head of the Cambridge University Israel Society as well as a committee member of the Cambridge University Jewish Society. Arranging a successful event is vital for getting people further involved in a cause. I already have a few ideas for speaker events and educational seminars that I would like to host for next year. I am very grateful for the practical experience gained this summer at AIPAC and believe that it will prove invaluable in my work on campus next year as well as in the future.