

This summer, I spent 11 weeks working for the Yale Center for Environmental Law & Policy. Despite the pandemic, I was able to have a very rewarding educational experience which has given me insight into my own career path moving forward. I worked with a great team of Yale graduate students, as well as a couple other undergraduate interns. The beginning of the summer was a mad dash to complete the 2020 Environmental Performance Index, a comprehensive bi-annual report released by the Center that scores and ranks 180 countries on their environmental performance over a variety of metrics. I helped proofread and edit reports and compiled citations for that project. The next major project was completing a manuscript for an upcoming book on sustainable finance and ESG investing. Again, I helped with proofreading, both suggesting grammar and style edits, as well as editing for content and clarity. I also learned how to format endnotes accurately. The book should be published this fall, and my name will appear in the Acknowledgements section! During the last part of the summer, my main task was compiling an updated list of relevant contacts and distribution lists for the Center, to be used for distributing press releases and other reports. I helped find emails and phone numbers for media contacts at news outlets and green newsletters, as well as a comprehensive list of government contacts, locating relevant people in state-level environmental agencies. Finally, I helped locate contacts at think tanks and environment-related NGOs. The whole list-building process really hammered home the importance of networking and making connections to make a larger impact. In between these larger projects, I also helped with the literature review for several white papers, taking notes on various articles and compiling relevant statistics.

I was so grateful for this opportunity, especially in a time when many students lost their internships. And I was able to learn a lot! Thinking about the environment, especially from a law and policy perspective, brought me to conclude that climate change is *the* defining issue of our times, for our well-being and that of generations to come. During my freshman year, I had taken a couple environment-related classes, so this internship was a natural next step. I am relieved to know that many smart and inspiring people have dedicated their lives and livelihoods to the environment, but am also more worried than ever for the future of our planet. Climate change is the ultimate intersectional and systems problem, and unfortunately affects low-income and minority communities disproportionately, as seems to be the cruel rule. Looking at climate change from a law and policy perspective has opened my eyes to the many policy misalignments and conflicting incentives that contribute to the problem and create extreme inertia that inhibits change. From a moral perspective, I have decided I need to dedicate more of my time and talents to combating climate change however I can, and as such, am now considering Environmental Studies as a concentration or secondary field. My time at YCELP also influenced my decision to take a year off for the 2020-2021 school year, instead of taking online classes. I realized I have not given myself enough time to reflect and think critically about my own skills and interests and how I can best apply them to better the world. I am planning to use this year to give myself that time and really invest in my mental health and self-confidence, before hopefully returning to campus in 2021 ready to take full advantage of the incredible resources the university has to offer.

Finally, I would like to thank the Harvard Club of Southern Connecticut for funding this opportunity. Having that stipend motivated me to work harder, and also has opened up more options for me as I move forward with a gap year. Thank you, sincerely. And a quick networking plug: I am in the process of looking for fall or spring opportunities in the fields of journalism or environment, and would be grateful for any contacts or suggestions!

My final takeaway from this summer: Yale isn't all that bad. Hope everyone in the club is healthy and safe, and thank you again for a great summer!

Sincerely,
Maliya