

Daniela Lugo

Graduation Year: Senior

College: Engineering

Major(s): Civil Engineering

Minors(s): CST

Scholar Group Membership: None

Did you received other funding for this project?: No

Could you have completed this project without CUSE funding? No

More details on CUSE funding assistance? My family's economic situation is not very good, considering the wages in Ecuador are significantly lower than in the US and that my dad has limited employment opportunities due to his Multiple Sclerosis. In addition, this being my graduation year makes it a year of considerable expenses, for which my family and I are not in a good spot to support me during a whole summer in NYC, one of the most expensive places to live.

Project Title: Internship at STV Inc.

Project Location: New York, NY

ND Faculty Mentor: Dr. Yvonne Mikuljan

Project Type: Internship

Why did you undertake this project/experience? Deepen your knowledge of a topic or issue, Career discernment and/or preparation

Did your funded experience help you:

[Deepen your understanding of your coursework or field of study]: Very Much

[Discern your interests and post-bac goals]: Very Much

[Become confident in your ability to set and achieve your goals]: Very Much

[Gain a more nuanced view of local, national, or global communities]: Yes

[Improve your written and verbal communications skills]:Very Much

Tell us about your experience.

This summer I was an intern at STV Inc., a full-service construction company in NYC. I was part of the structural department of the company, in charge of the building design of dozens of projects in the New York City Metropolitan Area. Throughout the summer, I had the opportunity to work with different types of infrastructure projects, including existing building repair and rehabilitation and post Superstorm Sandy flood resiliency projects. Most of the projects I worked on were for New York City Transit, which means that they affect the large number of people who use transportation services every day in New York. I was glad to see how in a more formal professional setting, the practice of structural engineering has an important role in shaping communities. I was also able to learn that there are many different paths one can follow within this discipline, yet multiple fields of expertise must work together to produce things that will benefit the population.

Describe the impact this project had, both on you as a student-scholar and on the people you worked with.

The project I carried out this year was very different to bridge building last summer. Being in an office in a highly urbanized environment definitely contrasts with rural Nicaragua. However, this opportunity was yet another step towards the same goal: that of helping build better infrastructure for people to live and develop in. It was amazing to work side by side with professionals in my field of interest who are as passionate about creating safer spaces for people. Although I didn't finish the summer with a fully constructed footbridge, I feel like the contribution I made to several projects this summer will eventually become a reality and be used by people in this city and hopefully, around the world.

Describe how this experience is connected to your plans as a student or future professional.

This was a very important career discernment opportunity for me since it has helped me determine I want to further pursue structural engineering. This means that I will try to find employment in this specific field and apply to graduate school. Through my internship I was able to see the great potential there is in this field to create resilient communities, but also understand the complexity of real life large scale projects in one of the most important cities in the world (NYC). I am now more certain that I need to become more proficient in the technical aspect in order to put it at the service of others. Finally, thanks to the work I carried out during the internship related to flooding resiliency, I was able to obtain a scholarship to attend the American Society of Civil Engineers Convention in New Orleans which brings together the best professionals in the field with a focus in risk and resiliency.

What advice would you give other students who are planning to pursue similar projects?

Internships are a great opportunity to learn more about an industry you might have an interest on. For this reason, asking questions, engaging people in meaningful conversations and being as helpful and proactive as possible is important. Don't be afraid to take on responsibilities and use the opportunity to network. You might be able to meet people with similar interests and more experience that can give you valuable career and life advice.

I acknowledge that this form has been filled out truthfully and to the best of my ability. I understand that this information will be shared with many different CUSE constituencies. As such, I have provided as much useful information as I was able. I understand that CUSE will not complete my award disbursement until this form is successfully completed. If I have any questions or concerns, I will contact CUSE before submitting this form. To illustrate that you understand all of these points, please enter your Notre Dame email in the box below.
dlugo@nd.edu

