

LSDI Executive Summary: Interning with the National Organization for Women

The National Organization for Women, founded in 1966 by feminist movement leader Betty Friedan, is arguably America's most influential grassroots organization. Historically, NOW is recognized as the fuel and support for the 1960s women's movement, and today its National Office in Washington, DC, is the center of its organized actions and political influence. Annually, NOW holds a National Conference for feminists in America to convene and to decide the Organization's benchmarks and goals in the coming year. This summer, I was NOW's Conference intern, and I learned the logistics of planning a conference and gained a new self-worth.

As Conference intern, I assisted my supervisor with last-minute details that were vital to the Conference's functioning. From packing boxes of office supplies, to making signs, to creating and printing name badges, I was asked to monitor the details. A person who usually focuses on concepts, paying attention details offered a new and important lesson for me. I found that the smaller issues (i.e. "Is my name spelled correctly on my name badge?") can highly influence first impressions and are therefore crucial to an overall experience. Moreover, as a person who often initiates tasks and leaves the implementation and follow-through to others, I found the value in sticking with a project until completion. Knowing each step of a process has better informed how I make decisions in the beginning steps.

Aside from learning logistics before and during the Conference, after the Conference, I was trusted with more arduous jobs such as developing a new curriculum for a positive body-image. During my research, compilation, and synthesizing of information about body-image, I was able to confront my own insecurities--insecurities of I had never been aware. Being in DC, I had constant access to knowledge in which I found support and empowerment. During my internship at NOW, I not only gained confidence in my professional abilities, but I also was supported in discovering a new level of self-worth--one that is grounded in facts and that I own with conviction.