



## BEING THERE - Brooke

Facilitator

Would you say there are any negatives for you then in relation to your study abroad or the internship?

Brooke

No. I wouldn't think so. No. I definitely remember it as, yeah, a quite opportunity and quite a defining experience. I got to access places that I never dreamed I would be able to go. Things like going to the The State of the Union address or going to the Iowa caucuses, which is a big political gathering during mid-term elections. So there were lots of things that I did that I would never have thought I would be able to do as an exchange student. I was very pleasantly surprised, I think.

Facilitator

A fantastic experience. So aside from the experiences, how would you say it changed you, like, on a personal level?

Brooke

Let me think about it. I probably came back a bit more focused on wanting to pursue political journalism and more open-minded about going into a political role, rather than just sticking

Brooke

to journalism. So it did open my eyes to some other career opportunities and at the same time, narrowed by focus in my career of choice. Since then, since that exchange experience, I went on to work for a politician and then to work in the press gallery as a political producer. So it did kind of fit quite neatly what I ended up doing outside of my studies. Yeah, sort of, did - I did land somewhere in the middle. So I would say it was quite a defining experience.

Facilitator

It sounds that way. So can you think of any examples of any unexpected or surprising benefits that have become more obvious now that you're working?

Brooke

Yeah. I probably say the narrowed focus on my career path, what I wanted to do with my career. I think that was definitely something I wasn't expecting, because at the time, it was all just loose ideas about, I like politics and I like journalism and I like The West Wing, so I'll go to Washington. But in hindsight, it seems a more structured path. Certainly the networking and the connections that I made there were incredibly valuable and still are valuable now, which I did not expect to be the case certainly.