

## Reflective Blog

*Why did you decide to pursue this experience, and how does it connect with your interests? What impact has this experience had on you and your future plans?*

I've only been exposed to health policy briefly when I took an introductory class to health policy and management at Cal, which I developed a great interest in and actually inspired me to apply and join the Margolis Internship program as a summer intern. In this class, we learned about the basics of how our healthcare system worked, learning about its inner mechanisms and flaws in design. We also learned about how health policies impact health outcomes across the nation. This sparked my interest in health policy because I wanted to learn more about the implications of health policy-related decisions. Just a few months prior to starting the Margolis Internship, I was working on a project on pharmaceutical drug development, examining potentially anti-competitive industry practices used by pharmaceutical companies and drug industry consolidation. My work was more focused on the health economic aspect of things, but I wanted to learn more about the legal side and policy approach to addressing this issue, which is what motivated me to apply. I wanted to learn how to effect change in our society and improve the well-being of our country's health. I decided to pursue this experience at the Margolis Center this summer because I wanted to gain a deeper understanding and background in health policy since I didn't really have a strong background in health policy. I wanted to become more fluent in health policy and learn more about how applicable and interdisciplinary health policy is.

My future plan for now is to pursue medicine and a graduate degree in healthcare policy and management. The Margolis Internship offered me valuable experience in learning about the importance of upholding health equity and understanding significant disparities in healthcare. I plan to carry what I learn with me regardless of what I end up doing. Having this health policy lens really helps put things into perspective and foster a greater understanding of a problem we're trying to tackle. I think my experience at the Margolis Internship really solidified my desire to become a future healthcare leader and it's encouraging and incredible to see many of my peers branch off and do amazing things within the realm of health policy.

*How has this learning experience differed from other learning experiences that you have participated in?*

I think the learning experience at the Margolis Internship was definitely a more hands-on approach with plenty of support and guidance from mentors, peers, and research coordinators. It definitely was a little bit daunting at first, but I quickly learned how to make the most of my resources and had constant support. Learning at school with class sizes of over 400 students kind of discourages me from asking for help or guidance, even though TAs and professors make an effort to be available to students. There's a considerable difficulty getting your professors to be able to not only remember who you are, but to be able to place a face to the name. Because of this, there is a disconnect in the learning experience where the student may feel like they're being deprived of the opportunity to interact with their teacher. Because the cohort of the Margolis Internship was much smaller, I think it was easier to be able to interact and ask questions to mentors, research coordinators and other speakers. Especially

having worked with my mentors on a weekly basis, it was even easier for me to establish connections with the people I work with, improving my overall learning experience at the Margolis Internship.

*How did your team engage in collaboration and teamwork? Did you discover anything new about how you learn or how you engage with a team? What was your role on the team? How did you work with undergraduate/graduate students/postdocs/faculty on the team, and what was that experience like?*

I attended weekly meetings with my team to check on the status of my work where my mentors provided feedback and constructive comments. It was a pretty small team of just three people and I thoroughly enjoyed getting to know my mentors better. I think having worked together with my mentors, I realized that I work better in smaller groups because I feel like there's more of a chance to establish connections and get to know what works and what doesn't work. I was the only undergraduate on the team and it was slightly intimidating at first working with such successful and accomplished people, but my mentors were incredibly supportive that I felt comfortable asking questions and presenting my work. My role on the team was to conduct a literature review of sources which may potentially help answer questions that my mentors posed about technology transfer in the context of drug development and drug pricing. I searched on Google, Google Scholar, PubMed and NIH websites for sources which better detail the process of technology transfer and understand the role of federal funding for R&D efforts in the pharmaceutical industry. I also searched for policy and intellectual property-related mechanisms to understand successful and unsuccessful pieces of legislation or actions in lowering the price of drugs. I presented my findings to the group and they provided feedback on my findings and comments on what I should search for next. Towards the end of the internship, my mentors provided me with helpful comments and suggestions for my research poster, helping me develop ideas for the content of the poster.

*What was the most rewarding aspect of your Margolis Internship experience? What was most challenging? What was the most surprising?*

I think the most rewarding part of my Margolis Internship experience was having the opportunity to listen to and learn about what my peers were working on over the summer. When I first started work at the program, I began working on my summer research project right away which kind of closed me off to learning more about what other interns were doing. Because this internship is remote, I didn't get a lot of chances to connect and meet with other interns. But having listened to other interns share their work or discuss important topics in health policy, I was amazed at how diverse health policy-related issues are and how passionate they are about these issues.

The most challenging aspect of my Margolis Internship experience was the whole online internship experience. The research coordinators did an incredible job in getting all the interns situated, providing every resource, being there to answer questions, and keeping interns up to date. Because I did my internship at home this summer, I was working with about a 3 hour time-zone difference. So there were a few 6am meetings for me sometimes which I had to work around. Also for deadlines and schedules, I had to be cognizant of the time zone difference, especially when it came time for my

research poster and I wanted to receive feedback for my work through email since my mentors were based in the East Coast.

The most surprising aspect of my Margolis Internship experience was the quality of the guest speakers and how incredible they were for journal club. It was really rewarding to learn about their experiences in the field and more about the work that they do. More importantly, learning about the projects that they're currently working on and challenges within the field of health policy.