

The internship I completed for the Fall of 2005 was one that I will never forget and will influence my life from now on. Not only did I get a great sense of personal accomplishment from learning new skills, but it was in particular a term of great personal growth. My way of life this past fall is one that I intend to continue, especially in terms of my political and cultural awareness, and this will require much more energy than it did in Washington, DC.

Specifically, my accomplishments in the internship were both practical and intellectual. Practically, I learned how to use Macromedia's Dreamweaver web design program, which helped me author the internship pages and other pages that needed to be added to the Feminist Majority Foundation website. It also helped me update their site content and bring them towards greater 508 compliance (compatibility for screen readers and other rules that help disabled people access site content). The 508 compliance issue was one with which the Feminist Majority Foundation has had problems, and so I used my newly-acquired skills to help update the Feminist campus website to make it more handicap accessible as my final internship project. In the future, the editors of the other sites owned by the FMF will hopefully keep these issues in mind when creating pages.

Another accomplishment was my mastery of Macromedia's Fireworks, a graphics editing program. This program allowed me to create banners and advertisements for specific pages within the various sites and grab the viewers' attention to important current feminist events. I still see some of my graphics up on the site, and I see them displayed on my Fall 2005 internship experience pages as well. I enjoyed being able to create animated pictures and banners, and the process of making these images made me think critically about the messages I was trying to convey in pictures. A good message must be concise and clear, and I now realize that designing images is much more difficult than writing a speech for a particular audience.

In terms of intellectual growth, I became aware of many women's issues and world issues that deal with women's rights in foreign countries. Much like other progressive activists, I now feel overwhelmed – more so than before – but I realize that collective efforts pay off in the end and that ignorance is not the answer. It is difficult to keep pace with all the issues I care about, especially in NH, but being in DC and gleefully talking daily about politics made me realize that the extra time is worth it.

The personal growth that resulted from my involvement in the Feminist Majority Foundation was great. Not only do I now consider myself a more concerned and aware person, but I now consider myself a feminist activist. Before I worked at the Feminist Majority Foundation, I considered feminism a movement of the past, with contemporary ideas of political correctness that were outdated and grave. Basically, I thought feminists were women that took themselves too seriously. Women had equality, I thought, and it was never going to go away for me or for those that will come after me.

However, now I realize that there are so many issues for which the contemporary women's movement is fighting that are essential, and many of these issues were never correctly resolved in the last wave of feminist activism with which I am familiar. To this end, there is a great gap in awareness and knowledge between the older generation of feminists that fought in the 1960s and my generation of budding feminists. My mother's generation of women thinks that my generation is inactive and does not care about the encroachments to women's equality that exist today. Though my generation may not be aware, I realized while I worked at the Feminist Majority Foundation that older women have not done a good enough job of outreaching to my generation, so we do not know the real threats to our liberties that exist today – it's not that we don't care. Many women my age think abortion is guaranteed by laws that are untouchable,

that birth control is accessible to all, that equal access to education and work is certain, and that women have basic equality in this day and age in the United States. Unfortunately, these things are becoming less and less true, and it is up to young feminists like me to make these issues important to our peers.

Another thing I realized that influenced the way I see the world is that many issues that seem like minority issues or women's issues are class motivated. There is a great deal of class warfare in this country, even though so many Americans may not realize or deny it. Socially conservative Republicans are in bed with the business lobby for a reason – because social conservatism acts to disenfranchise the poor, working classes of America. This impacts not just domestic policy, but also foreign policy decisions. For instance, high birth rates benefit big business because it provides a continuous source of low cost employment for foreign manufacturing and textiles, so United States aid policies like the Mexico City policy restrict the efficacy of family planning agencies and NGOs in other countries to provide vital services because of US policy of prohibiting abortion, even in countries where abortion is legal. Maintaining a low class in society keeps the rich rich and the poor poor. Many issues, such as abortion or access to birth control, are issues that disproportionately affect poor and minority women and those populations less likely to vote and protect themselves against attacks.

All in all, this experience was one of great personal growth, and I plan on continuing my research and thought into issues that affect me and women around the world. Also, I want to work to bridge the gap between the feminist movement and this newest generation of feminists here at Dartmouth by forming a Feminist Majority Leadership Alliance to raise campus awareness. There is a tradition of feminism at Dartmouth much overlooked, and I want to attempt to revive that for the rest of my college career.

