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REFLECTIONS FROM THE FIRST 90 DAYS OF THE
 CORO FELLOWS PROGRAM IN NEW YORK CITY

What is Going On?

Fall/Winter
 2007

- NYC GOVERNMENT
- MEDIA
- PUBLIC FINANCE
- BUSINESS
- LABOR
- CAMPAIGN
- NY STATE GOVERNMENT
- PHILANTHROPY
- NON-PROFIT
- FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

On Placement Rotations

“A press department is a pretty unlikely place to find an aspiring physician or public health activist. Upon arriving at the Public Advocate for the City of New York’s Press Office, I had a hard time imagining how the day-to-day tasks performed in this office – clipping newspaper articles, writing journal letters for religious or social benefits on behalf of the Public Advocate, organizing press conferences on bike safety – would engage or excite me. While daily tasks seemed mundane at times, I was given a snapshot of a government agency few people know exists – the office of the Public Advocate. Never before did I know that an entire office was dedicated to being the watchdog of city government, advocating for individuals to get the treatment and services they deserve from government agencies.”

-Lindsay Katona

“The most exciting part of my Coro placement experience so far happened when I was at the New York Immigration Coalition, doing media work in the midst of Governor Spitzer surprising everyone with his second proposal on granting driver’s licenses to undocumented immigrants through a 3-tiered ID pro-gram. The flurry of media outlets coming to the office for comments on the emerging situation made me appreciate the importance of a strong civic voice to check governmental power. Without this voice, policy setting often becomes a game played at the executive level only, at the exclusion of public input.”

-Vy Vu

On The Fellows Program

“The Fellows Program fosters a networking culture, and if you take advantage of the city and the access many of your Fellows possess, there is always a great way to network, learn, and have fun all at the same time. My Coro experience has introduced to me to many new things, especially professionally. One of the major reasons I decided to apply to Coro was that I didn’t know exactly what I wanted to do with my life. I figured several different placement opportunities in different sectors would provide me with a wide array of professional experiences. Nothing could be truer.”

-Fred Jones

Fareed Zakaria
 Editor
 Newsweek International





Christina Norman
President
MTV Networks



Michael Posner
President
Human Rights First

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LEFT
Errol Louis
Columnist
New York Daily News



RIGHT
Joel Klein
Chancellor
NYC Department of Education

On Group Process

“Our evolving group dynamic consumes a significant chunk of introspective energy, and many hours in seminar are spent discussing how we work, why we work in that way, and how we can change that function for the better. Though I would describe my under-graduate experience as having a communal sense of inquiry about social interaction, biases, race, gender, sex, class, etc., it doesn’t come close to fostering the minute scrutiny that we turn upon ourselves. Finding a caring, supportive environment, and the time for this sort of reflection is extremely rare, and I value it immensely.”

-Philip Clark

“I have learned an incredible amount about both the city budget and the way the media functions in just the past 17 days. The whole experience has given me a much better appreciation of the importance of these processes, as well as a very healthy (and growing) skepticism as to their integrity and efficacy. The other Fellows have been keeping me very much on my toes. We’ve started discussing power within the group, and I continue to reflect on these ways in which I unintentionally hurt others, as well as the ways in which my contributions are productive. This really does feel productive in helping me become the kind of person capable of leader-ship that I want to be.”

-Zachary Kolodin

On Public Finance Week

Our attempts to figure out the budget making process were exhausting to say the least. There were a wide variety of stakeholders in the process whom we had to consult in order to get the full picture of what was going on, and even after twelve or so interviews so many aspects of the process still lacked clarity. Part of this was obviously the quantity of information that was being thrown rapidly at us, but, perhaps more significantly, there were a surprising number of discrepancies between the facts, stats and anecdotes offered by our interviewees. More resonantly there were a number of information gaps that even after our exhaustive (and exhausting) week, we were unable to fill.

Put into situations where I am no expert, it has been both difficult and different to spend my time sifting through primary sources trying to reconcile competing viewpoints and fact sets and come out with something that approximates the truth. Witnessing this gap in reliable information has been somewhat of a revelation. In addition to confirming any suspicion or cynicism I was already formulating, it has given me a much more complicated way to think about decision making processes, both public and private, and how things ultimately get (or don't) get done. Either way, it is a great jumping off point for thinking more broadly about information, its use, and its construction – a useful thought process as I segue into my media placement.

-Sarah Johnson

