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Eastern Economic Association Conference, Boston, MA: 2012-2013

CSURF Travel Award Reflection

Two days before leaving for the Eastern Economic Association conference in Boston we did a final run through of our presentations. That day I had made several changes to the power point and the wording I was going to use, but I thought since all of the previous times I had given the presentation had gone well, I would be fine. I couldn't have been more wrong. I bombed. I made it through two slides out of thirteen, realized I had no idea what I was about to say, said I would work on it later and sat down without finishing. I was beyond embarrassed and extremely worried about giving the presentation two days later in Boston.

When we arrived in Boston, I was stressed out because I was dwelling too much on the presentation from the day before that hadn't gone very well. However, I made notecards just in case. I pride myself on not needing written help while in front of people. My roommate, Lee Parton let me give him the presentation several times and eventually I felt fairly confident about it.

While at the conference each student was expected to give a presentation and discuss another student's paper. I was the first discussant in the first session on the first day. I had absolutely no idea what I was doing. I read the paper I was to talk about and actually found it very interesting and easy to talk about. Discussing was a new experience, I leaned on what I had learned in Managerial Economics and Econometrics to make give suggestions and ask questions of the two girls who had written the paper. They did a very good job handling the questions from me and the audience and I began to feel even better about presenting.

In the fourth session of the day, I presented. When I got in front of the audience, I felt extremely at home. Upon finishing, I realized I had only forgotten one thing I wanted to say and it was not very vital to the presentation. It was far and away the best I had ever done in six or seven times giving the presentation to different groups of people over the course of the year. I found the confidence I knew I had inside of me and felt great during and afterwards. The people watching seemed very engaged and the professors in attendance were very complimentary.

Outside of the conference itself, I learned about timeliness to the airport and meeting places with our group around town. This was also the first time I had traveled by plane without my parents so that was new and fun as well. While in Boston, I got to do a fair amount of wandering around while the others were taking naps and saw a number of historic landmarks I had wanted to see. On my walk, I saw Boston Common, the site of the Boston Massacre, the Old State House, the burial place of Benjamin Franklin, Sam Adams, Robert Paine and those killed in the Boston Massacre and many, many more sites that I was not sure I would get to visit.

What I learned is that I can do more than I originally assumed. I loved being in front of the people watching and I loved talking about my project, "An Examination of the Effect of Police Expenditures on Arrest Rates." The pros of applied learning are it makes you come out of your comfort zone to see how you perform and it forces you to perform well. A con is the stress that comes before the instance of applied learning. This whole experience made me see that I enjoy talking in front of people and that I can see myself with a job in the future that includes presentations as a component of the job. I hope to go to more conferences as my college career progresses because this was some of the most fun I have ever had.

I would just like to say thank you for the travel grant. I do not know if I would have been able to go had I not received it.