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This summer I had the excellent opportunity to intern at the Inter American Press Association in Miami, Florida. As a student considering nonprofit work after graduation, during my eight-week stay at the IAPA I hoped to gain a better understanding of the day-to-day workings of a small nonprofit organization, as well as a more profound insight into the current state of speech and press freedoms throughout the Americas and how the IAPA works to promote those freedoms. Furthermore, I hoped to improve my written and oral communication skills in both Spanish and English, and to heighten my cultural awareness and appreciation through the opportunity to work alongside people from many different and diverse backgrounds. By the time my internship had come to an end I found that I had been able to achieve all of these goals, and I left the IAPA feeling confident that I had made a positive contribution to the organization.

Most of my daily responsibilities during my internship centered around the IAPA's hemispheric conference, SIPConnect 2015, which took place in Miami during the fifth week of my internship. The three-day-long conference was focused on strategies for the digital transformation of the press (including social media content, new platforms for audience engagement, mobile- and reader-friendly payment models, etc.), and because it was the first conference of its type to be hosted by the IAPA, there was a lot of excitement surrounding the event. One of my main duties was social media promotion leading up to the conference on platforms including Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, which proved to be very successful in spreading awareness for the event and for its utility for independent news sources throughout the Americas looking to take full advantage of recent technological innovations in the world of the

press. On Twitter alone, through my #SIPConnect2015 campaign I was able to nearly quadruple the IAPA's number of average monthly organic tweet impressions. Through a combination of the promotional work of the others on the team at the IAPA's Press Institute and my efforts on social media, we were able to attract 30 speakers and nearly 200 attendees to the conference from all over Latin America and the United States, which was considered an enormous success for a new event of this type.

Beyond social media, in the weeks leading up to the conference I was also largely responsible for writing and correcting translations of conference materials and presentations between English and Spanish. This was helpful for both the IAPA itself, a bilingual institution, and for myself as I worked to improve my written and spoken language skills. Being the only native English speaker in the office, in this role I felt especially valued and appreciated by my coworkers. I was also responsible for establishing and maintaining contact with the conference's speakers leading up to the event, including making sure they had all the materials and information they needed and receiving and testing their power point presentations. Along with helping with various organizational tasks, I was able to sit in on one of the IAPA's weekly webinars hosted using AdobeConnect software to promote the event. Without much prior experience at all with Adobe software programs, my coworkers patiently taught me the different programs I would use during my internship, and before long I was navigating them with ease. With time I felt more and more comfortable working independently and was encouraged to contribute my opinions and ideas during the planning phase before the conference, and this helped me feel like a true member of the IAPA team.

The conference itself, held at a large downtown hotel near the end of June, was a great success. Although the subject matter of SIPConnect 2015 was different than most of the IAPA's

other conferences, it was enlightening for me to see an example of the type of event put on by the IAPA in its role as both a human rights organization and as a journalistic association concerned with the future and digitalization of independent media. During the conference my main duties included live tweeting the speakers' presentations—which had a very positive response and engagement rate with the IAPA's Twitter followers—taking pictures, and organizational tasks like making sure the presenters' power points got to the right people on the audiovisual team, and so on. For me, the biggest takeaway from the conference was seeing firsthand the power of nearly 200 people from countries across the hemisphere coming together for a common cause and collaborating, sharing ideas and insights for their mutual benefit.

After the conference was over, in the final weeks of my internship I was able to learn a bit more about the IAPA's involvement in advocacy for speech and press freedoms in the Americas. For example, in conjunction with Pope Francis' upcoming trip to Ecuador later that same month, I was asked to read and discuss the most recent IAPA reports on the state of freedom of the press in Ecuador to better understand the context for the IAPA's open letter to the Pope regarding their concerns and asking for His Holiness' support and advocacy. With the busyness of the conference—though valuable in its own way—aside, these conversations and discussions were the most interesting part of my internship, in which I was able to engage in meaningful dialogue with my coworkers and learn more about them, their passion for journalism and the human right to freedom of expression. Throughout my internship with the IAPA, I felt very valued and welcomed as a member of the team. I left feeling very confident not only that I had achieved my goals and learned many new things, but that through my contributions I had made a positive impact on the organization as well.