

Neil Sash, AR – 2022

Representing my great state of Arkansas was a pleasure at this year's Washington Week online. The virtual nature of Washington Week brought its own set of challenges, yet each and every delegate was able to come together and make an experience of a lifetime. The amount of camaraderie and passion was palpable, creating an environment that was truly one of a kind and transcended the barriers keeping us apart.

As I look through my notes and ponder on my experiences, I find myself reminiscing over thoughtful words and enthralling questions posed by delegates and speakers alike. Speakers with many different views and coming from different backgrounds brought views from the entire political spectrum and gave us insight into the life of civil service. I was able to engage with speakers I had been earnestly awaiting, like retired Justice Anthony Kennedy and Major General Isaacson. In addition, I was exposed to topics that had not been at the forefront of my mind, such as the U.S. Army Jazz Ambassadors. Remarkable speakers were not the only incredible part of the program, but activities like touring Mount Vernon and interacting with delegates made this time so special.

One of my favorite parts of this amazing experience was the diplomacy situation facilitated by The National Museum of American Diplomacy. It was a true joy to see how others tackled problems and to have our collective love for history and government on full display as we engaged back and forth. Engaging in diplomacy was a great reminder to always consider the other side and how to continue positive political discourse.

The military mentor groups were a wonderful way to form deep connections with fellow delegates and have time to digest the insightful words and activities of the program. Of course, in order to help promote this atmosphere, our military mentor took great strides to make sure everyone's voice was heard and respected. My military mentor was amazing! She was a highlight of the program who taught me so many interesting things and made sure that we were always eager to find any excuse to talk with her.

Each and every delegate gave careful consideration to their words before speaking, making sure to bring forth new ideas and add to the ideas of others to create conversations that were pure art. The after-hours hangouts with delegates were an amazing time to have fun and make connections that will last a lifetime.

As the program closed out, I thought of the variety of backgrounds and upbringings that each individual had. With our individual differences and shared experiences, we all hold the belief that service to others will create a better country, a better world, and a better future. United, we are arbiters of meaningful change and shapers of the future. I am certain we will use the knowledge we have gained from Washington Week to build a better tomorrow for all people.