

MY GIP EXPERIENCE

Public Affairs in Cape Town

LAILA WHEELER

Majors: Public Affairs, Sociology, and Education

Term Abroad: Summer 2023

Internship Title: Human Rights Intern

Internship Company: Africa Unite

What were your primary responsibilities as an intern?

As the main intern for the School Leadership Club, I attended cabinet meetings with students, created educational workshops, and gained event-planning experience. I also attended community conflict mediation meetings, drafted reports on international seminars, and helped clean up a township.

What was your biggest accomplishment at your internship?

My biggest accomplishment at my internship was introducing a project management tool to the entire company, which helped my coworkers advance their organizational programming. It was rewarding to have an impact that will live on beyond my limited time at Africa Unite.

What surprised you about the work culture in your host city?

While workplaces in the United States often operate in such a strict manner due to capitalism, South Africa was the opposite and fostered a human-first mentality. There wasn't an hour that went by where my coworkers weren't cracking jokes, laughing, and enjoying the fullness of each others' company while still being productive. Everyone genuinely loved the work they pursued and found fulfillment in working together as a team.

What was your favorite part about living in your host city?

The people 100%! There is no doubt that the Cape Town locals are genuinely the friendliest people on Earth. From their welcoming energy, uplifting spirit, and openness to make new friends, the loving people made a foreign country feel like home. I made countless friends on the vibrant streets who quickly turned into a little family, and for that, I am forever grateful.

What was the most memorable aspect of your internship experience?

The most memorable aspect of my internship was the out-of-office experiences when my coworkers and I went on mini work adventures, explored the city during lunchtime, or even just blasted our favorite Afrobeats in the office. This made work feel less like work, and more like a collective community.



Cape Town has all the wonders anyone could ever dream of in a travel destination: spectacular nature, beautiful wildlife, delicious food, and of course, amazing people.