

**Emma Stockton**

**2019 Fall Meeting Reflection: Urban Land Institute/Randall Lewis Health Mentorship Program**

As a dual-degree student in public health and city & regional planning, I knew that the ULI/Randall Lewis Health Mentorship Program could be a perfect way to connect with others who were working in and are also passionate about the connection between health and the built environment. My experience at the Fall Meeting truly exceeded my already high expectations.

Over and over again I heard that the members are what make ULI so great. Prior to the Fall Meeting, most of my experience with ULI had come from their helpful publications and case studies for school, but the Fall Meeting was my first experience with the members themselves. After attending academic conferences that left me a bit overwhelmed and exhausted, I left the Fall Meeting invigorated and eager to enter into the professional world. Having grown up in the DC area and recently living in DC, getting to learn more about the city I consider home from many of the top professionals and officials in the area was a treat.

I had the opportunity to attend the ULI Resilience Summit on Climate Risk and Resilience in Real Estate, where I attended a panel about the connection between public health, the built environment, and climate change. The panel had a range of perspectives from a community organizer, an educator, and a landscape architect. While most of my studies are focused on transportation and health, I learned about the variety of exciting ways people are making a difference at important intersections. The first night of the conference, the ULI/Randall Lewis Health Mentorship Program mentees, mentors, and ULI staff got together for dinner, which was a great introduction to our program and the days ahead. We had the honor of meeting Randall Lewis, who made this and many other programs possible. I also got the chance to meet my mentor, James Moore, and learn about everyone's backgrounds and interests.

Participating in the Urban Revitalization Product Council gave me unique perspectives on my own city and provided me the time to connect with a variety of professionals. The Product Council days ranged from learning more about the history of my own neighborhood of 14th Street from Marc Fairbrother, an architect who has designed buildings for the corridor, to learning about the process of bidding for Amazon HQ2 from two of the most influential people in the process, Alex Iams and Andrew VanHorn. I also valued the smaller group time for getting to know people that are engaged in such a range of professions and for being able to discuss what I was hearing at the conference with my mentor.

I personally witnessed arguably the best thing ULI does for its members. One of my favorite moments of the meeting was with a man who has been a developer for 40+ years. We were chatting after a presentation on equity during the development of one of the DC waterfronts. He told me that for most of his career, he never considered affordable housing as part of his job or role as a multifamily housing developer. It was generally framed as the government's or another organization's role. He was reflecting on how maybe he was wrong, and started wondering aloud if he could start thinking about that in his own work. By exposing its members to these conversations and best practices, ULI is pushing these land use professions forward, which we all benefit from.

I am already looking forward to the Spring Meeting and getting a chance to reconnect with members I met this fall. I hope to get involved locally with ULI Triangle while I finish my degree and then connect to ULI wherever I land after graduation. I am incredibly grateful to Randall Lewis and ULI for the wonderful opportunities this program has already given me.