

Interview Assessment #4

Name of Professional: Gabriella Pate

Profession/Title: Deputy Chief of Staff

Business/Company Name: U.S. Congressman Sam Johnson

Date of Interview: Monday, October 1, 2018

Assessment:

My fourth informational interview was, interestingly enough, not with a professional in local government, but instead a federal government employee working in a local capacity. Ms. Pate was recommended to me by Ms. Wagoner and the chance to meet with her was, and is, something I'm so grateful for. I hadn't considered previously to the interview how national positions, like Sam Johnson's in U.S. Congress, function outside of Washington D.C., but of course, as representatives of the residents of their district, they do a lot of local outreach and work.

Ms. Pate explained that primarily what she did as the Deputy Chief of Staff of Mr. Johnson in Plano was a lot of constituent casework. Now, a few weeks since the interview, I've actually learned about Congressional casework in AP Government, so it was really cool to me that I had gotten that context and background from my interview with Ms. Pate and then was able to apply that to my government test. One thing I still wonder is how much Mr. Johnson functions between the two levels of government? Ms. Pate mentioned that he split his time between Washington D.C. and his district, but what does the Congressman regularly do to interact with the people in Plano, and other areas in the Texas 3rd district?

Another really interesting thing that surprised me about the interview is that a lot of the work Ms. Pate does is pretty standard. In other words, it's not as if she's always paving new ways politically in this country, but she really stressed that what she does is very influential within the district. This in particular really inspires me, because it reflects why I'm so interested in local government in the first place. Maybe local government isn't making national news, but a lot of times it's the local workers that keep everything running. There's so much honor in working in local government because there's definitely less media and emphasis revolving around it, but the work is just as important, if not more, than the really high-profile political jobs.

Another aspect of the job that I was interested to learn more about going into the interview was the election season. Ms. Pate's been working for Mr. Johnson through a few election cycles, especially because House is up every two years, and I wondered how that affected her job. Up until that point, the only other person I'd talked to with some election experience was Mr. Maso, and he was the one directly running. Ms. Pate said that it definitely did change the job a little, but because Mr. Johnson is so well-respected in comparison to a brand new figure, for example, he didn't do as much campaigning and because of that, elections didn't change her job too much.

Overall, I'm so happy that I got to talk to Ms. Pate. I certainly didn't anticipate speaking to someone working in the federal government when I started this year, but I'm so glad I got the chance to. Being able to compare her job with positions in a local capacity allows me a lot more perspective, and I think it's connections like that that really make ISM so cool. I don't always know exactly where I'm headed, but even when I'm a little lost or end up somewhere I don't expect to, I still always get so much out of the experience.