



Ada Garcia -Poll
2017 Newman Civic Fellows National Conference

I've experienced an astonishing opportunity by representing SUNY Buffalo State College as a Campus Compact Newman Civic Fellow, it made me realize that there are people out there who have the same intentions as me and are willing to do whatever it takes to make a change in their own communities. The year-long Newman Civic Fellowship recognizes and supports community-committed students by enhancing skills students need in order to serve as effective agents of change in addressing public problems and building equitable communities.

Before I traveled down to Boston for an annual conference to meet the rest of the 250 student Newman Civic Fellows, I did not know what to expect, only that I would have to walk into a room full of students from different schools across the country. Our first activity was an ice breaker. Unfortunately, it was impossible to exchange words with every single one of the fellows, however throughout the conference I got to meet amazing individuals who shared the same ideas as me.

We split up into groups to attend different workshops where we discussed the importance of the senate and the process it takes to vote for a bill. My favorite part was being able to play the role of a senator and learning how to vote with the tablet that was given to us with our own simulated political party and state. Furthermore, we observed a panel where public service leaders from the Boston area spoke about their experiences and how they take part in their community. They also gave us advice on how to remain involved in our own communities as student leaders.

Before we said our goodbyes, The John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum was holding an event where speakers from all over the world came in to share information about different volunteer programs, conduct presentations on a variety of social issues, and share personal stories about President Kennedy if they had met him during his presidency.

I am thankful for interacting with so many students that share the same mindset as me and hearing the amazing work they are doing on their campuses. I believe this was an amazing opportunity for me to stay involved on campus and share my experiences with other students to encourage them to take action on their own communities, whether it is on campus or even their hometowns. It also gave me the motivation to keep up with politics and do more research to educate myself on social issues that are happening in my community.