

Reflections from Jessica Espinoza about the MANRRS trip to Birmingham, Alabama.

As a graduate student there are many responsibilities that are asked from us. But being asked to take these students to a conference, in another state, about an organization that I had little knowledge was quite the educational opportunity. I did not give it too much thought but I knew that we could manage the challenge. Being able to learn about MANRRS thought out the trip was quite enjoyable. It was surprising to see so many (educated) minorities who truly wanted the best for other students and wished everyone truly the best. MANRRS is a group of people that is truly dedicated to the mission of professional development and growth, something that I feel we really gained on this trip.

I was able to attend a number of sessions but of all those attended I thought that the one of minority women was the most empowering and inspiring session/experience I have had in years. I enjoyed the panel of women in powerful positions. It has reminded me that there is so much to reach for, so many opportunities to come. I also attended another session where a veterinarian, after several years of working, went back and attended law school. He was truly inspirational and really got me thinking about other routes I could take with my career.

I was tested in ways I didn't know existed. We were faced with conflict and people's boundaries were tested, which I feel were later efficiently addressed and dealt with. I have served as a mentor and student advisor for students but given the more intimate setting it was truly rewarding to help these students immediately and what I thought was effectively. David and I teamed up and worked together and really tried to make this experience valuable and rewarding, I think it even made us closer. I feel that we both really worked together and were good role models for these students.

One of my goals for this trip was for the students to make close relationships with us and the other students. There was always a lot of talk about how the students enjoyed the New Mexico students and how it gave students an opportunity to get acquainted and close to other students. So with that I wish hoping to recreate the same outcome for those who attended the conference, and really believe that strong bonds were built with the Birmingham trip.

This experience definitely stimulated the students and my own personal growth. I one day intend on taking a job opportunity where I oversee many in order to accomplish the goals at hand, this I feel allowed me to grow a little more equipped to accomplishing that goal one day. All of the individuals we spoke with and described the grant and circumstances praised the program and congratulated us for being part of MANRRS. This grant really is making a change in so many young Hispanic students' lives, which I know many, will go on and make valuable contributions to the work force and all those who they encounter.

The grant allows us to gain knowledge and experiences that many other students on campus will never acquire. Whether it is gained in future classes, jobs, relationships and other aspects of your life this trip made a difference for me personally and professionally.



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