

“City Links” this past weekend was a good time to get to know fellow CSA cohort members, but not a good time to get to know the freshmen students of Azusa Pacific University. We started the day of work by handing out water to the freshmen students as they walked to their destinations of work. This meant we were unable to go in work groups with an alpha leader and freshmen students. So, we spent the day working with one another as a cohort. Our work site was at an elementary school where we helped facilitate and run a fair/carnival. Though the program they were putting on was great, they did not need all the help our cohort had to offer. There were too many of us for the site, but this allowed us to really get into some conversations with each other.

I enjoyed talking with Dave and Andrew about why they are choosing to be in the CSA program. It was great to hear about what has brought them to this point and also what they are passionate about. We also chatted about internships and what our jobs look like. Dave is trying to find out what his position entails as the person working alongside of Chris Brown. He likes the job itself, especially the people interaction. He struggles a bit with the lack of structure and not knowing what to do next. Andrew enjoys Biola and the people he works with. He and I have connected on the level of desiring to work outside of the Christian bubble. I see his passion for this and enjoy hearing about his questions and concerns about both the Christian circle and the secular circle. Talking with them and hearing what they like and do not like about the college student affairs field was a lot of fun.

I also had the chance to interact with many others within our cohort. Many conversations were started with people about their passions and why they chose to enter the CSA program. I enjoyed talking with others working outside of APU’s campus to

hear their joys and struggles of the jobs. It was good to connect with others who are finding it challenging to balance life, school, family, jobs, and everything else.

Though talking with people in the cohort was great, I missed having the opportunity to talk with and connect with Freshmen students. It was a little disappointing for me to go into the day expecting this, but not having it happen at all. I enjoy having interaction with students who are just starting college and hearing their stories, what they like, and what they are struggling with. Though I have some of this at Cal Poly, I had been looking forward to seeing the difference of attitudes in students starting at APU. I think it would have helped to really have been more planned out in knowing exactly where each CSA member was supposed to go and what group they were supposed to be working with.

The other part of the day that was a challenge for me was not having a lot to do at our work site. It is hard for me to feel my time is valued when I show up somewhere to work and they did not need all of our cohort's help. I simply have so many other things on my place, that it was a little disappointing to not be used effectively when I had the opportunity to give my time for the day.

Even though the City Links project turned out to be something different than I had expected from the beginning, it was a good chance to really get to know some of the people in the first year cohort. I really enjoyed hearing their stories and getting to see some of their personalities. Overall, the day had both its ups and downs—I would have enjoyed being with Freshmen, but I also know I was blessed to talk with my peers.