

Fall Fellows Conference
November 5-7, 2009

The Center for the Study of the Presidency and Congress recently welcomed the 2009-2010 Presidential Fellows class to Washington, DC for the Fall Leadership Conference at the Doubletree Hotel in Crystal City, Virginia. The Conference commenced with a lunch, at which the Fellows were welcomed by Center Vice President and CFO Dr. Thomas Kirlin. After lunch, a featured career panel of young professionals in the think tank, military, and governmental fields spoke on their areas of expertise and offered career path advice. Following the panel, Fellows were divided into issue groups—Challenges Abroad, Domestic Challenges, The Bully Pulpit, The President and Policy, and Presidential Campaigns, Communications, and Elections—to present their paper proposals and receive feedback from alumni counselors and their peers. That evening, the Fellows were treated to an engaging presentation by Center Senior Fellow Egil “Bud” Krogh on his experiences while serving under President Nixon and his thoughts on the pursuit and maintenance of personal integrity.

Early Friday, the Fellows traveled into the District to the Supreme Court Building. As they sat in the heart of the building beneath the elaborate and enigmatic reliefs, they were briefed on the nuances, history, and tradition of the Court. Following the Court Room briefings, the Fellows walked across First Street to the Capitol Building where Congressional staffers were waiting to give the Fellows a first-hand account of life on Capitol Hill and the campaign trail.

On Friday evening, Rear Admiral Susan Blumenthal moderated a distinguished panel of health care experts. Disease control and prevention, veteran’s health care, and the ever-present health care reform debate were issues discussed by the panelists and prodded by the Fellows. Following the health care panel, renowned American University professor, moderator of the *American Forum* series on NPR, and former Fox News commentator Jane Hall led an interactive discussion on the media’s influence on and presence in the Fellows’ generation and how the Fellows can use new media and social network technology to make a difference in the world.

On Saturday morning, Center President David Abshire closed the Fellows Conference with a discussion of personal responsibility and the failures in moral character that resulted in last year’s fiscal crisis.

Exposure to the aforementioned lectures and events, as well personal contact with their individual mentors, has laid the groundwork for a terrific Fellows year. The Center will continue to engage the Fellows after they return to their respective schools by developing a multimedia network where they can keep in contact and share information with their peers. The forthcoming Spring Leadership Conference will undoubtedly reveal strong friendships and stellar paper results.