

Two students visit D.C.

Anita Molina, UNC Mirror, June 21, 2005

Two University of Northern Colorado students recently had the opportunity of a lifetime when they were selected to attend the eighth annual Wayne Allard Capital Conference. The conference, held earlier this month in Washington, D.C., hosted 22 Weld County residents and was cosponsored by both the University of Northern Colorado and the University of Colorado-Boulder.

UNC students Kelly Rose Olson, the Student Representative Council vice president for legislative affairs, and Kacie Morgan, the SRC vice president to the Board of Trustees, were two of the 120 Coloradoans invited to the prestigious conference.

Senator Allard, in a statement released to The Mirror, said the event offers a unique experience to students.

"(It offers) unparalleled opportunity to interact with public policy makers, members of Congress and President Bush's Cabinet to gain a better understanding of how our government functions," he said.

Olson, the former president of the Young Democrats, expressed a deep appreciation for the knowledge and experience she gained through attending the conference. "When dealing with campus politics, parties are not forced to work together nearly as much as is necessary in real world politics," she said.

Coloradoans invited to the conference included town mayors, real estate brokers, social workers, bankers, nurses, educators, community leaders, attorneys, CEO's and ten college students.

UNC President Kay Norton was also among the guests. At the event, Allard and Salazar emphasized teamwork in representing Colorado.

In addition to Sen. Wayne Allard, R-Colo., hosting the conference, there was also a variety of political powerhouse speakers including Sen. John Kerry, D-Mass., Chairman of the Federal Reserve Board Alan Greenspan, Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton, D-N.Y., Sen. Ted Kennedy, D-Mass., political analyst Charlie Cook and many other prominent political leaders.

The conference was a gathering of individuals representing both the far left, the far right and a plethora of viewpoints in between. Each speaker spoke on any topic of their choosing, covering issues including government funding for science, AIDS in Africa and Asia and likely presidential candidates for the future, as well as many other local and national political issues.

The biggest thing Olson took away from the conference was the realization that politics are about groups working together in a compromise.

"I really began to appreciate and comprehend that politics are about bipartisanship and that one cannot get by in real world politics by just sticking to your own party," she said. Olson, a student with a significant political background and experience, plans to use the knowledge gained from the conference next year in her SRC position by stressing to UNC students that politicians are real people with real interests and all people have real interests that matter to them.

"People vote for things for different reasons, a person's vote does not define them. Just because someone does not agree with you does not make them a bad person," said Olson.